

## Socialists and the animal question

By Jon Hochschartner

Despite government repression of animal activists, in many ways there has never been an easier time to be vegetarian or vegan. One can find a wide selection of food without animal products in the most unlikely of places, such as small towns of upstate New York, where typical accoutrement is not tie-dye but NASCAR caps. The national vegan population is increasing rapidly, doubling between 2009 and 2011, according to a Harris Interactive poll. And yet the socialist left remains particularly inhospitable for those concerned with animal domestication.

This hostility goes back a long way. As Dr. Steve Best points out, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels "lumped animal welfarists, vegetarians, and anti-vivisectionists into the same petite-bourgeoisie category comprised of charity organizers, temperance fanatics, and naive reformists." Leon Trotsky railed against those opposed to revolutionary violence, scornfully describing their ideology as "vegetarian-Quaker prattle."

Things aren't that different today. Paul D'Amato, a writer for whom I otherwise have a good deal of respect, took on the animal question in a Socialist Worker column which reads as little more than uninformed trolling.

"Does a mountain lion that kills a deer have a right to a trial by a jury of its peers?" He asks ridiculously. "Should cows have freedom of assembly, speech and religion?"

He acknowledges he is speaking with tongue in cheek, but insists "there is a point to it." D'Amato goes on to recount Adolph Hitler's animal protection efforts, because, you know, animal activists are actually closet Nazis.

Things are hardly any different on the anarchist side of the aisle. For instance, log onto the LibCom.org forums, which are maintained by London-based libertarian communists, and ask, as I have, the otherwise nice folks what they think of vegetarians or vegans. And you'll see the British didn't get their reputation for beef-eating for nothing.

And yet animal activists have always been part of progressive change. John Oswald, for instance, was a Scottish vegetarian who was a member

of the Jacobin Club, took part in the French Revolution, and died fighting monarchist forces. Elisee Reclus, also vegetarian, was a participant in the Paris Commune of 1871, for which he was imprisoned and exiled. Of course, Mahatma Gandhi, vegetarian, led the movement to topple British colonialism in India. Cesar Chavez, vegan, co-founded the organization that would become the United Farm Workers union. One could go on with such examples. But I would prefer to hear from readers of historical figures they know who incorporated animals in their progressive vision. I am most interested in hearing of leaders who were women, people of color or engaged in explicit class struggle.

In a preface to an edition of *Animal Farm*, George Orwell explained the central metaphor of his satirical novel, writing, "Men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat." Modern animal activists, such as Bob Torres and David Nibert, have expanded on this unifying theme, injecting Marxist thought into the emerging field of critical animal studies. But there has been no similar effort on the part of anti-capitalists.

I don't expect the socialist left to suddenly develop an appetite for veggie burgers and almond milk ice cream. The broad movement anti-capitalists hope to create will be reflective of the masses. And veganism is just not where the masses are yet. Much of this has to do with vegan options, at least the processed ones, being prohibitively expensive. This will change when economies of scale come into play.

But the attitude toward animal rights among the socialist left is more reactionary than that of the general population. My low-wage coworkers might think my views regarding non-humans are privileged and eccentric, but they never display the vitriolic scorn my beliefs earn among the socialist left.

My theory is that large segments of the socialist left, which at the moment are disproportionately made up of white-collar workers, has adopted a misguided workerism, by which I mean a perspective that glorifies a crude caricature of blue-collar culture, in an attempt to bond with those on lowest tiers of the capitalist system. To these more privileged members of the working class, casual indifference to animal exploitation is a defining trait of blue-collar workers. That this is immensely condescending should go without saying. But it's also not based on a socialist understanding of class. For socialists, economic groups are not defined by eating habits, culture or even income. They're defined by someone's relationship to the means of

production.

My class-struggle resume isn't anything to write home about. But it's not something I'm embarrassed about either. I've written for a variety of leftist publications, from SocialistWorker.org to Z Magazine. I was active in the Occupy movement, for which I spent a couple days in jail. I filed charges against my employer, and won a settlement, for union-busting. I feel I've made some humble contributions. But I'm also vegan. And I'm sick of feeling I'll be treated like the late comedian Rodney Dangerfield--no respect!--if I don't hide this in socialist circles.

### Socialists and the 'pet' contradiction

By Jon Hochschartner

Socialists, like everyone else, absorb our culture's contradictory messages regarding the value of animals. We learn that certain species, such as dogs and cats, should be cherished as members of our families. While other other species, such as pigs and chickens, should be viewed as resources to be exploited. By looking at the relationships between three influential socialists of varying perspectives — Leon Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, and Alexander Berkman — and their companion animals, I'd like to illuminate the irrational positions they held and so many of us continue to hold toward other species.

In 1938 the surrealist writer Andre Bretton traveled to Mexico to visit the exiled Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky. As Bretton walked with the old Bolshevik, he was disappointed to find that when Trotsky spoke of his dog, "his speech became less precise, his thought less exacting."

In fact, Bretton continues, Trotsky "went so far as to express love for the animal, lending it natural goodness." Since here Bretton uses the impersonal pronoun, which one would apply to non-conscious objects, it should come as no surprise the surrealist argues, "there was something arbitrary about endowing beasts with feelings."

But Trotsky, apparently, would have none of it. According to Bretton, it "became clear that (Trotsky) was vexed to follow me along this path: he clung to the idea...that the dog felt friendship for him, and in the full sense of the word."

The Polish Marxist Rosa Luxemburg had a deep bond with her cat Mimi, who she described as her "daughter." Her letters include frequent references to Mimi. In one, for instance, she enthusiastically describes Mimi's meeting with the Russian Marxist Vladimir Lenin.

"She also flirted with him, rolled on her back and behaved enticingly toward him," Luxemburg writes. "But when he tried to approach her she whacked him with a paw and snarled like a tiger."

When Luxemburg was imprisoned in 1916 for her opposition to World War I, she apparently had the option of taking Mimi with her. But she regretfully decided it would be cruel to do so, as the conditions were too harsh for her beloved companion.

"Weeks pass without my hearing the sound of my own voice." Luxemburg writes. "This is why I heroically resolved not to have my little Mimi here. She is used to cheerfulness and bustle; she is pleased when I sing, laugh, and play hide-and-seek with her all over the house; she would be hipped here."

During anarchist Alexander Berkman's imprisonment for an attempted assassination of a wealthy industrialist in 1892, he befriended a bird, who visited his cell, who he named Dick. However, one day another inmate kicked Dick to death. Berkman ran at the prisoner and knocked him down, for which Berkman was placed in solitary confinement.

Years later, Berkman recounted the story for a child, saying, "I had a friend who was a bird. He was my best friend when I was all alone and had no friend. I would save part of my roll every day and put it on the window sill and share breakfast. And one day a very bad man came along and killed the bird."

All four socialists ate the flesh of animals very similar to their companion. So how could Trotsky say he loved a dog, with whom he believed he had a genuine friendship? How could Luxemburg object to a cat living in a human prison? How could Berkman attack a man for killing a bird?

It's clear from these examples that — in prolonged, close proximity to animals they were less socialized to view as property — that Trotsky, Luxemburg and Berkman recognized their companions as individuals with worth outside of their usefulness to human ends. Sadly, these

socialists were unable or unwilling to generalize this insight onto other domesticated species.

Was Commune Louise Michel a vegetarian?

By Jon Hochschartner

Since I'm interested in both socialism and animal rights, historical figures who managed to reconcile the two ideologies fascinate and inspire me. That's why I find the question of whether the French commune Louise Michel was a vegetarian so interesting.

During the Paris Commune of 1871, she served the working-class uprising as an ambulance worker and militia member. When the rebellion was overrun, Michel was captured and tried. She dared the court to execute her, but ultimately was imprisoned in France for almost two years before being deported.

In her memoirs, Michel wrote that she traced her progressive politics to animal-protectionist feeling. "As far back as I can remember, the origin of my revolt against the powerful was my horror at the tortures inflicted on animals," she said. "I used to wish animals could get revenge, that the dog could bite the man who was mercilessly beating him, that the horse bleeding under the whip could throw off the man tormenting him."

She wrote that from an early age she rescued animals and that habit continued into adulthood. "I was accused of allowing my concern for animals to outweigh the problems of humans at the Perronnnet barricade at Neuilly during the Commune, when I ran to help a cat in peril," she said. "The unfortunate beast was crouched in a corner that was being scoured by shells, and it was crying out."

Michel believed there was a link between the subjugation of animals and the subjugation of humans. "The more ferocious a man is toward animals," she wrote, "the more that man cringes before the people who dominate him." In fact, she credited her opposition to the death penalty to witnessing the slaughter of an animal as a child.

She raged against vivisection, writing, "All this useless suffering perpetrated in the name of science must end. It is as barren as the blood of the little children whose throats were cut by Gilles de Retz and other madmen."

According to the International Vegetarian Union website, one Louise Michel attended the 1890 International Vegetarian Congress in England. The report of the meeting states she "expressed her views on Vegetarianism. The eating of flesh meant misery to the animals, and she held that it was impossible for men to be happy while animals were miserable."

And yet, search her memoirs for the term 'vegetarian' and you will find nothing. As a very young child, Michel was traumatized by the sight of a decapitated goose. "One result was that the sight of meat thereafter nauseated me until I was eight or ten," she wrote, "and I needed a strong will and my grandmother's arguments to overcome that nausea." This of course suggests she consumed flesh and her memoirs do not immediately mention a later-in-life change in practice.

She also wrote, "Instead of the putrefied flesh which we are accustomed to eating, perhaps science will give us chemical mixtures containing more iron and nutrients than the blood and meat we now absorb." This could be interpreted as anticipating the in-vitro meat now being developed. But it could also be read as a reflection of her belief that animal-derived foods were nutritionally necessary or superior in her era.

While it seems clear where her sympathies were, I'm unsure if Michel was a vegetarian.

## Examining the species politics of Socialist Party USA

By Jon Hochschartner

Socialist Party USA is the only nationwide anti-capitalist organization which addresses the treatment of animals in its political platform as far as I'm aware. Groups such as the International Socialist Organization, the Industrial Workers of the World, Solidarity, Democratic Socialists of America, and Communist Party USA, among others, don't offer the most tepid welfarism in their unity statements.

Socialist Party USA is a multi-tendency organization, made up of state and local groups from Wisconsin to Mississippi and New York to California. It claims to be the successor to Socialist Party of America, the organization led in the early part of the 20th century by Eugene Debs.

The very final section in Socialist Party USA's 2013-2015 platform is dedicated to

what's termed 'Animal Rights,' but would be identified as animal welfare in protectionist circles. The first sentence in the brief section states, "The Socialist Party recognizes the rights of animals to live free from unnecessary pain and suffering, and the responsibility of people to protect those rights."

This position is so vague it's useless. A minimalist interpretation would suggest that any pain and suffering inflicted on animals that's outside of what's needed for their successful exploitation should be opposed. A maximalist interpretation would suggest that since almost all animal exploitation involves pain and suffering and is unnecessary for human well-being, all animal exploitation should be opposed. One must assume that Socialist Party USA meant something much closer to the former.

The second sentence asserts, "We support the spaying and neutering of pets to prevent the massive extermination resulting from overpopulation." As far as I'm aware, this is a near-universal position that is unfortunately not put into practice enough. I don't think that it would get serious argument from anyone, anywhere on the political spectrum. So I'm not entirely sure why it's included.

The third sentence says, "We oppose entertainment that causes pain to animals." This position does not include, as that in the first sentence does, the qualifier 'unnecessary,' which is so open to interpretation. Still the position is vague enough that it's not particularly useful.

The fourth sentence states, "We call for the banning of the fur trade." This, I would argue, is the first position in the section that proposes a substantive, progressive reform to our exploitive relationship with animals. Yet it establishes a certain cognitive dissonance. Why should the fur industry be banned and not, say, the 'leather' industry? Why, for that matter, the fur industry and any of the other industries associated with the exploitation of animals? One must assume it's merely because those who buy fur represent a smaller percentage of the human population than those who buy other animal products. Thus the fur industry is seen as an easier target for reform than others.

The fifth sentence asserts, "We support greater inclusion and enforcement of the Endangered Species Act." This, of course, is more of an preservationist position than an animal protectionist one.

The sixth sentence says, "We call for a ban on animal experimentation for product development, and for an oversight board to examine and limit the use of animals in scientific and medical research." While obviously merely a reform and far from ideal from an animal rights perspective, this is another substantive, progressive proposal.

The seventh sentence states, "We oppose factory farming practices of overcrowding, drugging, and otherwise cruelly treating animals." Again, this final proposal suffers from vagueness which leaves it relatively useless.

Despite my criticism here of the platform of Socialist Party USA as the document relates to animals, it should be again pointed out that, as far as I'm aware, none of the other nation-wide, anti-capitalist organizations address the use of non-humans in their unity statements. That groups nominally dedicated to fighting exploitation wouldn't have anything to say about the treatment of the world's overwhelming majority of sentient creatures is shocking. But one shouldn't be shocked given the speciesism of society, of which the left is a part.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was a vegetarian (at least for a time)  
By Jon Hochschartner

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, a leader in the Industrial Workers of the World and later Communist Party USA, was a vegetarian for at least a portion of her life. The texts I've been able to access suggest her choice was to some degree influenced by animal-welfarist concern.

The inspiration for folksinger Joe Hill's song "Rebel Girl," Flynn was a feminist and founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union, in addition to her roles as a socialist and labor leader. Her activism took her from New York City, where she spent her formative years, to Russia, where she died.

Her dietary change was inspired by Upton Sinclair's book "The Jungle," which she apparently read as a teenager. "After reading it I forthwith became a vegetarian!" Flynn stated in her memoir. "He wrote this book in 1906 to expose the terrible conditions of the stockyard workers and advocate socialism as a remedy. But the public seized rather upon the horrible descriptions of filth, diseased cattle, floor sweepings and putrid meat packed in sausages and canned food."

Sinclair was himself a vegetarian, but apparently for health reasons, rather than any sort of concern for animals. "It has always seemed to me that human beings have a right to eat meat, if meat is necessary for their best development, either physical or mental," Sinclair wrote later. "I have never had any sympathy with that 'humanitarianism' which tells us it is our duty to regard pigs and chickens as our brothers."



This does not seem to have been the case for Flynn. Writing of her visit to the Chicago stockyards in 1907, she said she "couldn't stand to see the animals killed. The frightened squeals were dreadful. I remained vegetarian. It smelled bad, looked bad, and left a bad taste for days afterward."

Despite her sympathy, it was clear she believed animal-protectionist concerns should be prioritized below the class struggle. Writing of the Lawrence textile strike of 1912, she said, "The workers of Lowell, a nearby textile town, led a cow garlanded with leaves, to the strikers of Lawrence. I felt sorry for her with her festive appearance and mild eyes. But she had to be slaughtered to feed hungry children. Her head was mounted and hung up in the Franco-Belgian Hall."

How long she remained vegetarian is unclear. Flynn wrote her memoir at the age of 65 and the tone with which she describes the vegetarianism of her youth sounds patronizing. At the risk of overanalyzing, for instance, the exclamation mark used after declaring her past vegetarianism — "I forthwith became a vegetarian!" — reads to me as if she now thinks her earlier position was absurd or scarcely to be believed at the time of writing.

Her later involvement with Communist Party USA, which was closely tied to the Soviet Union, and of which she eventually became chairwoman, also suggests she might have given up vegetarianism. To what degree, if any, this is the product of Red-Scare hysteria I'm not sure, but a variety of sources state that vegetarianism was banned in the Soviet Union.

According to the website of the International Vegetarian Union, for instance, "The revolution of 1917 stopped the development of vegetarianism in Russia. The Soviet State authorities considered vegetarianism as a pseudoscientific theory that reflected the bourgeois ideology and therefore harmed to Soviet people. In 1929 the last vegetarian society in Moscow was closed...The leaders of the vegetarian societies were persecuted, many of them arrested and sentenced." According to the Moscow Times, at one point the Big Soviet Encyclopedia ridiculously stated, "vegetarianism, which is based on false hypotheses and ideas, does not have followers in the Soviet Union."

ISO might form animal-liberation tendency

By Jon Hochschartner

Alan Peck, a member of the International Socialist Organization, the largest group on the revolutionary left, hopes to launch an animal-liberation tendency within the organization. He believes capitalism and animal exploitation are connected and suspects a significant minority of the ISO would be interested in joining the tendency.

Peck was first introduced to the ISO in late 2011. "I met the local branch of the ISO during the first general membership meeting of my union after I was hired, right as Occupy Wall Street broke out," he said. "I'd already followed left-of-Obama politics for a number of years, so when a guy made a proposal to endorse Occupy San Diego and form an Occupy solidarity group within our union, I made a point to strike up a conversation with him."

As it happened, the person Peck spoke with was a revolutionary and together they joined the Occupy San Diego Labor Solidarity Committee. There he found that "many of the activists making the clearest, best arguments and being the most effective leaders were all from this strange socialist group," Peck said, referring to the ISO.

His political transformation occurred quickly. While the Occupy San Diego General Assembly fizzled, the Labor Solidarity Committee to which he belonged flourished. "Within a handful of months, I transformed from a disaffected former Democrat who thought a repeal of Citizens United would solve everything, into a full-on Marxist," Peck said.

He believes the ISO needs an organized tendency for vegetarians and vegans to agitate for animal-liberation positions within the group. "The combination of laws, customs, and economic incentives that support animal agriculture closely resembles other systems of oppression within capitalism, often eerily so," Peck said. "Just as we believe that racism, sexism, and queerphobia will not end without the overthrow of capitalism, and capitalism cannot be overthrown without challenging these oppressions inside the system, I think that what we do to animals is interrelated with the exploitative system of capitalism in the same way."

Still, Peck seems to concede that widespread veganism is not necessary to overthrow private ownership of the means of production.

"Materially, there is nothing keeping the working class from organizing to overthrow the rulers while still eating animals," he said. "However, the ideologies that support the infliction of unnecessary suffering on non-human animals in the interest of profit are the same ideologies that must be confronted and undone in the process of ending capitalism and building a better world."

Additionally, Peck said, the worst animal abuse occurs on factory farms, the same spaces where the most severe exploitation of human workers and degradation of the environment also take place. "Given these facts, I think it is right for revolutionaries, and revolutionary organizations, to challenge the system of animal exploitation," he said.

Peck is hopeful that a sizable portion of the ISO membership would join an animal-liberation tendency. "In the branch, about a fifth are vegan or vegetarian," Peck said, adding he believed that percentage would join the tendency. "I don't know the landscape in other branches. I suspect the numbers are similar in other urban branches."

Still, Peck might have his work cut out for him in forming a tendency, as the organization's rules don't explicitly condemn or condone their formation. While there has been a lively discussion of the need for caucuses and factions within the group, he said, there has been little talk of tendencies. "We see caucuses as organizations of members who are part of a specially oppressed group, and we see factions as temporary formations to agitate for a political position," Peck said. "Most members see factions as probably necessary at times but inherently hostile. A tendency on the other hand would not be hostile to the main politics and practice of the organization, but nonetheless advocate a minority position."

Vegan Angela Davis connects human and animal liberation  
By Jon Hochschartner

While Angela Davis is well known for her progressive perspectives on race, gender, and class, less well known are her views on species, which are quite forward-thinking. The great socialist scholar, it might surprise some to hear, does not consume animal products.

"I usually don't mention that I'm vegan but that has evolved," Davis said at the 27th Empowering Women of Color Conference, according to a

transcript available at [RadioProject.org](http://RadioProject.org). "I think it's the right moment to talk about it because it is part of a revolutionary perspective - how can we not only discover more compassionate relations with human beings but how can we develop compassionate relations with the other creatures with whom we share this planet and that would mean challenging the whole capitalist industrial form of food production."

Challenging this form of food production, Davis said, would involve witnessing animal exploitation firsthand. "It would mean being aware - driving up the interstates or driving down the 5, driving down to LA, seeing all the cows on the ranches," she stated. "Most of people don't think about the fact they're eating animals. When they're eating a steak or eating chicken, most people don't think about the tremendous suffering that those animals endure simply to become food products to be consumed by human beings."

For Davis, this blindness is connected to the commodity form. "I think the lack of critical engagement with the food that we eat demonstrates the extent to which the commodity form has become the primary way in which we perceive the world," she said. "We don't go further than what Marx called the exchange value of the actual object- we don't think about the relations that that object embodies- and were important to the production of that object, whether it's our food or our clothes or our iPads or all the materials we use to acquire an education at an institution like this. That would really be revolutionary to develop a habit of imagining the human relations and non-human relations behind all of the objects that constitute our environment."

Davis struck a similar note in a video recording uploaded to the Vegans of Color blog.

"I don't talk about this a lot but I'm going to do this today because I think it's really important," she said. "The food we eat masks so much cruelty. The fact that we can sit down and eat a piece of chicken without thinking about the horrendous conditions under which chickens are industrially bred in this country is a sign of the dangers of capitalism, how capitalism has colonized our minds. The fact that we look no further than the commodity itself, the fact that we refuse to understand the relationships that underly the commodities that we use on a daily basis. And so food is like that."

Davis suggested viewers watch the film 'Food, Inc.' "And then ask

yourself," she said, "what is it like to sit down and eat that food that is generated only for the purposes of profit and creates so much suffering?"

Davis concluded her comments by explicitly linking the treatment of humans and animals.

"I think there is a connection between, and I can't go further than this, the way we treat animals and the way we treat people who are at the bottom of the hierarchy," She said. "Look at the ways in which people who commit such violence on other human beings have often learned how to enjoy that by enacting violence on animals. So there are a lot of ways we can talk about this."

It's hard to be looney on the "looney left"  
By Jon Hochschartner

I'm a socialist and an animal-rights advocate. I also live with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

After hearing about my mental health challenges, a typical reactionary comment might be: "Well, I should have known you were a nut from your politics!" (Of course, the joke's funny because one would have to be crazy to support an egalitarian society or to oppose killing animals for gustatory preference.) The fear of having my perspective easily dismissed in this way is one factor that has, in the past, led me to delay and sometimes altogether avoid getting the psychological support I need.

Those who are outside the mainstream are frequently pathologized. And because those on the far left of a particular issue are, by definition, outside the mainstream, it's no surprise that pejoratives used against progressives are often couched in terms of mental illness. One hears phrases like "the looney left" all the time on right-wing radio, for instance. Thus a situation is created in which radicals who suffer from psychological problems are reluctant to admit their trouble for fear of confirming conservative criticism that their politics are not based on principle but on mental instability.

Progressive writers, while respectful of mental-health issues, seem all too aware of the potential unwanted implications that leftists with psychological trouble would represent. I'm very, very far from an Encyclopedia Brown of socialism or animal rights. But I've read a bit. And off the top of my head, I can't think of a single significant radical figure who has been identified as suffering from psychological

trouble. This is surprising, even assuming those who rise to leadership positions are least likely to be those in mental distress, given what we know about the frequency of mental health problems in the general population.

I can only assume a history of women and men working for change with the burden of mental health problems exists, but progressives choose to not to discuss it for fear the left is at the moment so weak it can't bear the additional stigma. Whether this realpolitik is justifiable in today's conservative climate, I don't know. But it has been unhelpful for me and I imagine many others.

The potential of leftists with mental health problems having their politics pathologized is quite real. I experienced this during the breakdown that led to my diagnosis with OCD intrusive thoughts. To be fair, this was done less by mental-health professionals and more by my family, who believed they were acting in my best interest.

To understand this, one must know a little bit about scrupulosity, which is often described as "OCD plus religion." The classic sufferer might repeat a prayer thousands of times a day in the hope of thinking or saying it in just the "right" way. The Catholic Church has long been aware of this destructive phenomenon of hyper-morality and one could speculate that significant figures, such as the founder of the Jesuits, who confessed petty sins unceasingly for hours and couldn't bear to step on pieces of straw that formed a cross, as he feared doing so was blasphemous, were sufferers.

As our society has become more secular, psychiatrists are beginning to diagnose obsessive adherence to non-religious ideological systems as scrupulosity. And here's where it gets complicated. I believe at times I have been pathologically scrupulous in my commitment to socialism and animal rights. Now, this might give you the impression that I am or was some kind of perfect progressive. But that would be inaccurate and represent a misunderstanding of how OCD works.

First, scrupulous obsessions often focus on completely meaningless things, as shown by the example of avoiding the crossed straw. Second, OCD sufferers often avoid what triggers their obsessive thoughts because the mental and behavioral compulsions associated with them are simply too exhausting.

For instance, most people would assume that those who engage in cleaning rituals have immaculate houses. This isn't always the case. Sometimes their hygienic compulsions become so burdensome they will allow their living spaces to degenerate into squalor rather than engage their obsessions.

"If something dropped on the floor I couldn't pick it up again," one poster on [OCDForums.org](http://OCDForums.org) relates. "If I did pick it up I went into cleaning compulsions."

In a similar way, at various times in the past I have avoided politics altogether, often moving intentionally in reactionary directions, because I knew from experience that engaging with progressive thought could bring me to create arbitrary, hyper-moral, and increasingly restrictive rules for myself that would eventually lead to a nervous breakdown.

But the difference between those with a religious scrupulosity and those with a leftist strand (such as mine) is that sufferers of the former are never counseled to give up religion altogether. Instead, they are encouraged to adopt a less draconian and more self-tolerating faith. I, on the other hand, was encouraged to avoid political activism completely. My family, for instance, discouraged me from publishing broad critiques of capitalism in our local newspaper and argued with me when I decided to resume my veganism, which I had given up in the immediate wake of my breakdown. I don't blame them for this, especially considering the amount of heartache my turmoil put them through. But I think their position needs to be examined within a context of religious ideology today being mainstream and therefore sane, and socialist and animal rights ideology being outside the mainstream and thus potentially pathological.

OCD is often described as pathological intolerance of doubt. This can be seen in how I am most comfortable in being completely politically committed or, conversely, totally disengaged. I am uneasy in the uncertain middle ground that most of us belong to. It's going to be a long-term struggle for me to learn to tolerate that uneasiness and find balance, without either engaging in a self-destructive, impossible search for political perfection or abandoning my ideals entirely. Still, my OCD affects only my expression of my political ideals, not their essence.

I'm a socialist and an animal rights advocate with mental health challenges. My politics are not a symptom of my disorder.

'Dehumanization' made possible by low-status of animals

By Jon Hochschartner

Throughout history, when one human group exploits or oppresses another, the dominant group invariably justifies its actions by likening the subordinate group to animals. This isn't a coincidence.

By successfully linking subordinate groups to animals in the popular imagination, dominant groups are able to justify their position by tapping into society's widespread speciesism, which views the exploitation or oppression of animals as

legitimate. In this way, the fight against speciesism and those against racism, sexism, and classism, among others, are connected. Let's look at a few examples of how dominant groups link subordinate groups to animals.

In "The Eternal Jew," a racist, 1940 Nazi propaganda film, Jewish people are explicitly compared to rats, a species upon which humans place particularly little value. "Where rats appear, they bring ruin by destroying mankind's goods and foodstuffs," the narrator intones. "In this way, they spread disease, plague, leprosy, typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, and so on. They are cunning, cowardly and cruel and are found mostly in large packs. Among the animals, they represent the rudiment of an insidious, underground destruction - just like the Jews among human beings."

In 2013, a white 911 operator in Texas compared African Americans to animals on social media. "Call after call are black people fighting and screaming and hitting each other and they want to yell at me and treat me like shit," the operator wrote. "Black people are outrageous! They are more like animals."

The writer Samuel Johnson, who died in 1784, reportedly compared women's participation in public life to animals unnaturally mimicking human behavior. "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs," Johnson said. "It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

Arguing in favor of forcing women to carry pregnancies to term after 20 weeks, in 2012 a Georgia state representative implicitly compared women to livestock. "I've had the experience of delivering calves, dead and alive – delivering pigs, dead and alive." The male lawmaker said. "It breaks our hearts to see those animals not make it."

In "The Principles of Scientific Management," an influential 1911 monograph by Frederick Winslow Taylor in which the techniques of modern capitalist exploitation are outlined, Taylor repeatedly compares human workers to domesticated animals. "Now one of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type," Taylor writes. "The man who is mentally alert and intelligent is for this very reason entirely unsuited to what would, for him, be the grinding monotony of work of this character."

More recently, for instance, in 2012, Terry Gou, the chairman of Hon Hai, parent company of the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer Foxconn, compared his workforce to animals and suggested he could learn management



techniques from the director of the Taipei Zoo. "Hon Hai has a workforce of over one million worldwide and as human beings are also animals, to manage one million animals gives me a headache," Gou said.

The struggles for human liberation and animal liberation are linked, if only because dominant human groups employ speciesism to justify the exploitation or oppression of subordinate human groups that society deems "animal-like." By bettering the conditions of animals, we better the conditions of humans.

Take the subject of class. Progressives are well aware that raising the wage of the lowest-paid workers will boost the income of higher-paid workers as expectations for 'fair' compensation rise. Conversely, progressives know that lowering the wage of the lowest-paid workers will drag down the income of higher-paid workers as expectations for 'fair' compensation fall.

The same relation can be seen when one looks at the treatment of animals and the treatment of humans. As expectations rise for what constitutes 'fair' treatment for animals, the supposed lowest of the low, expectations for what constitutes 'fair' treatment for humans will also rise. In contrast, the 'dehumanization' of human groups is made possible by the low status of animals. The sooner the anthropocentric left recognizes this, the better.

The tragicomic history of the OWS Animal Issues group  
By Jon Hochschartner

Lately, I've become interested in the possibilities of animal-rights activists forming sub-groups within broader left-wing organizations and movements. Today, I will recount the story of brave souls attempting to do just this and failing in spectacularly-hilarious fashion. Without further ado, I present the tragicomic history of the Occupy Wall Street Animal Issues working group.

The group met only nine times, according to the New York City General Assembly. One would be stretching the definition of the word to describe some of these attempted gatherings, for which the minutes were faithfully documented, as "meetings."

The group first met on February 1, 2012, well after Occupy Wall Street was evicted from Zuccotti Park and the movement was on its way to irrelevance. Eight people attended this inaugural meeting, which started half an hour late. A heated debate quickly broke out regarding the costs and benefits of a horizontal-organizational model, as the group argued whether to make everyone an administrator of what one must assume is their mailing list.

"Johanna responds that she wants to feel free to e-mail information and that how the group is choking with bureaucracy and she doesn't experience this with any other group and things are more flowing and freer," the minutes state. "Ruth disagrees and expresses concern about changing this policy so that everyone could be an administrator. "

But the dispute doesn't end there. "Dan agrees with Johanna and expresses that the spirit of OWS is not to have hierarchies, and that everyone should be an administrator," the minutes state. "Adam replies that is not a question of hierarchies but of making sure things are organized and safely reliable."

This leads one member to threaten to quit. As the minutes say, "Johanna replies that if she is not going to have the freedom to get things done, then she is going to have (to) leave the group." After being interrupted by a passerby asking for potato chips, the meeting was closed.

The group's third gathering, on February 15, did not go well either. The only one in attendance, Adam was listed as the meeting's facilitator and note taker. "Adam walked around 60 Wall Street looking for people looking for the meeting. He found no one," the minutes state. "Adam left."

Turnout for future gatherings was better, but not by much. The fifth meeting, for instance, boasted only three attendees. If the minutes available are complete, months passed between the fifth meeting and the sixth. Listed in attendance at the sixth gathering was a "LOUD coffee grinder," which one guesses made talking difficult. There was no facilitator for the meeting, as presumably the tiny group had given up the pretensions it was necessary.

While the results were sadly humorous, those in the OWS Animal Issues should be applauded for attempting to inject anti-speciesist politics into broader leftist movements. Let's hope that future attempts will be more fruitful. There is evidence that formations of the anthropocentric left can be pushed in progressive directions by what are assumably minority, pro-animal voices within them. Socialist Party USA, for instance, calls for the ban of the fur trade and animal testing for product development. Though these are obviously piece-meal proposals, if put into practice they would benefit millions of animals every year.

Does socialist critique of terrorism apply to animal activists?

By Jon Hochschartner

The animal rights movement has long been divided between militants and

pacifists, between those who support violence against property or institutional exploiters and those who do not. In one camp, we find activists like Steven Best, who argue the scope of animal exploitation is so great that preventative violence is a moral necessity. In the other, we find activists like Gary Francione, who argue all forms of violence are wrong, including those directed at institutional exploiters or their property.

I'd argue that by focusing so intently on the morality of violence, the animal rights movement often ignores whether the debated tactics are effective. Additionally, I'd like to investigate what, if anything, we can learn from other movements that have grappled with the question of terrorism. In this essay, I will be examining the revolutionary workers' struggle specifically.

Most socialists don't have a moral opposition to violence, but recognize it's generally incapable of creating large-scale, permanent change when carried out by individuals or small groups. By the 1890s, according to Randall Law, even anarchists were distancing themselves from the doctrine of 'propaganda by the deed,' with luminaries such as Peter Kropotkin declaring a "structure based on centuries of history cannot be destroyed with a few kilos of explosives."

In a 1911 article, "Why Marxists Oppose Individual Terrorism," Leon Trotsky, whatever one's interpretation of the Bolshevik Revolution might be, neatly summarized the socialist case against political violence carried out by individuals. First, it's important to understand how Trotsky defined terrorism for the sake of his article. Terrorism was not limited to "the killing of an employer... (or) an assassination attempt, with revolver in hand, against a government minister." Terrorism included "the damaging of machines by workers, for example."

For Trotsky, the human masses were the fundamental agents of progressive change. Practitioners of terrorism falsely believed they could become these agents themselves and skip past the process of winning the masses to their position. "In our eyes," Trotsky writes, "individual terror is inadmissible precisely because it belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness, reconciles them to their powerlessness, and turns their eyes and hopes towards a great avenger and liberator who some day will come and accomplish his mission."

Obviously, the points about agency Trotsky raises here doesn't apply to the animal rights movement. Unlike the human masses, who must collectively liberate themselves, animals cannot do so. They must rely on the human masses for their freedom. Some contemporary socialists, such as Paul D'Amato, have argued this fact justifies denying animals rights. But such a position ignores that many human groups, such as infants or the severely-mentally disabled, cannot fight for their interests either and must rely on the human masses to do so for them.

Still, if Trotsky is right, and terrorism discourages collective action by the human masses, when that is what's required for real change for animals, one must conclude terrorism is a dead-end. On the other hand, one could also argue that collective action by the human masses on behalf of animals is so unlikely in the present era that individual terrorism is the best for which we can hope.

In his article, however, Trotsky goes on to highlight how little terrorism achieves, besides increased police repression. "The smoke from the confusion clears away, the panic disappears, the successor of the murdered minister makes his appearance, life again settles into the old rut, the wheel of capitalist exploitation turns as before; only the police repression grows more savage and brazen," Trotsky writes. "And as a result, in place of the kindled hopes and artificially aroused excitement comes disillusionment and apathy."

Trotsky's point regarding increased police repression is undeniable in the context of the animal rights movement to anyone who has read the work of writers such as Will Potter on the Green Scare. Further, as Trotsky says, the wheel of systemic exploitation is generally unaffected by terrorism. Slaughterhouses and laboratories are generally rebuilt. While the non-human lives saved by terrorism should not be ignored, animal activists frequently seem to mistake the use of terrorism as the symptom of a robust movement, when in fact it's the opposite. Resorting to such desperate actions represents an inability to garner the mass support needed to create real change.

To be clear, I'm not prescribing solutions in this article. I'm merely suggesting animal activists move beyond abstract debate regarding the morality of political violence to a concrete discussion of its effectiveness. To do this, we needn't reinvent the wheel. Let's learn what we can from other movements that have grappled with the issue of terrorism. Some of the lessons won't be applicable, but many will.

Elisee Reclus: the vegetarian communitarian  
By Jon Hochschartner

Elisee Reclus, the French anarchist and geographer, was a proselytizing vegetarian who held progressive views of other animals. Serving as a militia member, he was an active participant in the Paris Commune of 1871, a working-class uprising that Karl Marx dubbed "the glorious harbinger of a new society." After his capture by government forces, Reclus was initially to be deported to New Caledonia, an archipelago off the coast of Australia. But due to the intervention of his supporters, which according to some sources included Charles Darwin, Reclus' sentence was reduced to banishment, which allowed him to live in Switzerland.

Reclus was sensitive to violence against animals as a young child. "One of the family had sent me, plate in hand, to the village butcher, with the injunction to bring back some gory fragment or other," Reclus wrote, recalling an example. "I still remember this gloomy yard where terrifying men went to and fro with great knives, which they wiped on blood-besprinkled smocks. Hanging from a porch an enormous carcass seemed to me to occupy an extraordinary amount of space; from its white flesh a reddish liquid was trickling into the gutters." Overwhelmed by the sight of the slaughterhouse, Reclus apparently fainted.

Reclus wrote perceptively about the process which allows humans to commit such violence, a process we might call speciesist socialization. A child's horrified reactions to the exploitation of animals "wear off in time; they yield before the baneful influence of daily education," Reclus stated. "Parents, teachers, official or friendly, doctors, not to speak of the powerful individual whom we call 'everybody,' all work together to harden the character of the child with respect to this 'four-footed food,' which nevertheless, loves as we do, (and) feels as we do."

Perhaps anticipating the work of writers such as Joan Dunayer, Reclus recognized the role language plays in denying or rationalizing animal exploitation. "The animals sacrificed to man's appetite have been systematically and methodically made hideous, shapeless, and debased in intelligence and moral worth," Reclus wrote. "The name even of the animal into which the boar has been transformed is used as the grossest of insults; the mass of flesh we see wallowing in noisome pools is so loathsome to look at that we agree to avoid all similarity of name between the beast and the dishes we make out of it."

And of course Reclus believed there was a connection between violence against animals and violence against humans. "Is there then so much difference between the dead body of a bullock and that of a man?" Reclus asked. "The dis severed limbs, the entrails mingling one with the other, are very much alike: the slaughter of the first makes easy the murder of the second, especially when a leader's order rings out, or from afar comes the word of the crowned master, 'Be pitiless.'"

Reclus died in 1905 at the age of 75. "It is reported that his last days were made particularly happy by news of the popular revolution in Russia," according to Camille Martin and John P. Clark. "He expired shortly after hearing of the revolt of the sailors on the battleship Potemkin."

Could a meat-eater advocate for a vegan society?

By Jon Hochschartner

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the emphasis animal activists place on the

assumed need to practice personal veganism so as to advocate public veganism. In its most basic form, the question that has been rolling around my head boils down to whether it should be acceptable for a meat-eater to advocate for animal liberation, a phrase I use to mean, as Ronnie Lee does, "an end to all persecution, exploitation and killing of other animals by human beings or for us to reach a situation that is as near to that as possible."

While this issue has been rattling around my head for some time, a few readings and experiences have recently brought it to the fore.

One of these thought-provoking readings was Norm Phelps' book "Changing the Game," particularly those sections which dealt with the distinctions between movements that focus on private morality and those that focus on public policy. He listed regressive campaigns such as prohibition, the war on drugs and the anti-abortion movement as belonging to the former, while highlighting progressive campaigns like the civil-rights movement, second-wave feminism and the LGBT struggle as belonging to the latter.

"The public generally sees animal rights as belonging to the private tradition," Phelps wrote, after pointing out the population of vegetarians and vegans in the United States has not grown or shrank over at least the past dozen years, fitting with the pattern he established of movements associated with the private tradition failing. "They believe this in large part because we place so much emphasis on personal dietary decisions and comparatively little emphasis on institutional and societal attitudes toward animals."

Another of these readings was an interesting article called "Animal Liberation and Marxism," in a recent issue of the Weekly Worker, a publication of the Communist Party of Great Britain. In a section of the article, members and supporters of Assoziation Dämmerung, an animal-liberation group informed by the Frankfurt School, were asked about the importance they place on the 'prefigurative' nature of personal veganism.

While all defended the prioritizing of personal veganism, for the most part they did so less strongly and for different reasons one might expect. None of them, for instance, did so because they believed a product boycott was a feasible way to end or limit animal exploitation, so far as I could tell. Susann Witt-Stahl summarized what seemed to be the majority's defense of personal veganism as primarily necessary for unbiased thinking.

"If you accept our ideas yet continue to eat meat, it is also true that you remain trapped in a process of self-alienation," Witt-Stahl said. "You cannot eat animals if you truly perceive them as tormentable bodies. If you eat animals, you will

inevitably have a different relationship to them: they are just things, objects to you - not beings that strive for happiness or at least want to avoid suffering."

Finally, one of the experiences that brought the question of the importance of personal veganism to prominence in my mind was attending a recent lecture by Rod Coronado at Skidmore College. For those not aware, Coronado is something of a legend in the animal-rights and environmental communities for sinking Icelandic 'whaling' ships and releasing mink from research farms, among other things. I had heard a few years back he had given up veganism, but thought perhaps he had adopted it once again, as he was launching a speaking tour that was heavily promoted in the animal-rights community and included stops at the 2014 Animal Liberation Forum. This wasn't the case. I asked during the question-and-answer section whether he was vegan and he said he wasn't.

While I briefly toyed with the possibility of centering this essay around Coronado, I quickly realized he was not an adequate test case for whether practicing personal veganism was necessary for advocating public veganism because I was doubtful he saw animal liberation, using the definition supplied by Ronnie Lee, as an end goal. My understanding was that he approved of pre-industrial methods of exploitation of animals by humans.

Ultimately, I'm still very confused about how I feel about the issue. For instance, what would the historical equivalent be, in another movement, to a meat-eater advocating animal liberation? Would it be an 19th-century abolitionist who used slave-produced goods? My brief research suggests the majority of abolitionists did not seriously engage in boycotting. Or would it be closer to an abolitionist who owned slaves?

Moving to the worker's movement, with which I am more familiar, would the equivalent be a socialist who used goods produced in sweatshops? Well, as a socialist I can say that most comrades I've come across tend to view such boycotts as hopelessly naïve and do not engage in them. Or would the closer equivalent be a socialist who owned a large business? Frederick Engels owned a mill, though he spent a good deal of his fortune bankrolling revolutionaries such as his intellectual collaborator Karl Marx. Perhaps there is no useful comparison.

A negative side effect of animal activists' emphasis on the assumed need to practice personal veganism so as to advocate public veganism that I've noticed is that it opens us up to and, in fact, invites what I'll call "gotcha anti-veganism." Gotcha anti-veganism involves criticizing failures or inconsistencies in someone's personal practice so as to ignore their public proposals for animals. For instance, an exaggerated example of this might include someone saying, "Oh, you didn't know Cheerios have vitamin D3 in them, which comes from lanolin, which comes

from sheep's wool? Well, you're complicit in the exploitation of animals and therefore have no right to complain about slaughterhouses."

One might assume that gotcha anti-veganism is employed solely by domestication apologists. But animal activists reinforce this self-defeating standard all of the time. Gary Francione, for instance, frequently points out that there is little difference between the violence involved in the most egregious, prosecutable cases of animal abuse and everyday treatment of farmed animals. This comparison is a useful tool that I've borrowed. But the way in which it is frequently presented suggests that non-vegans have no right to criticize any form of violence against animals. On a practical level this has a silencing effect on potential allies who are critical of non-human abuse, which is ultimately detrimental to the animals' cause.

So I'm conflicted. What do you think? Should it be acceptable for a meat-eater to advocate for a vegan society?

Laurie Penny's species politics are disappointing  
By Jon Hochschartner

Laurie Penny, a talented British writer, is a rising star among the current generation of international leftists. Her blog, "Penny Red," was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize, and she has subsequently written for the socialist Morning Star and progressive New Statesman, among other publications. While Penny's work stresses intersectionality, the public statements she's made regarding non-human animals are disappointingly reactionary.

The comments were made in a 2009 post to her blog, subtitled "fuck the animals." One hopes that in the intervening years her views have evolved. But evidence of such is not readily available. After justifiably critiquing sexist advertising campaigns run by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, making points vegan feminists have made many times, Penny launched into a broader, problematic attack on animals.

"In case it wasn't clear already, yes, I do think that women - and men, children and intersex people for that matter - are more important than animals," Penny said. "I don't get warm fuzzy feelings for 90% of the animal kingdom. I couldn't care less if pandas finally become extinct despite millions of pounds of national and international money being poured into trying to make them fuck."

The extinction point was obviously absurd, given that species preservation is primarily an environmental concern, not an animal-liberationist one. But more troublesome was the false dichotomy she established between political work on behalf of humans and political work on behalf of animals. Many people do both,



and Penny's division ignored how speciesism undergirds many forms of human oppression and exploitation. It is no accident, for instance, that throughout history dominant human groups have justified their domination of subordinate human groups by likening the latter to animals.

"Sure, animal cruelty is bad, it probably shouldn't happen, I'm definitely not down with the kitten-microwavers, but at the end of the day, I prefer people," Penny said, in what was obviously an attempt at humor but nonetheless reinforces the perception animal exploitation is an individual problem, rather than a structural one. Further, Penny supported vivisection. "I'm behind animal testing, if it saves lives, which it does," she said, before making light of horrific non-human suffering. "I'd kick a hundred kittens in the face to save one AIDS victim. I'd shave several litters of puppies to save one junkie. I would even inconvenience an asthmatic gerbil to save James Purnell."

Here Penny used vivisection as the form of exploitation with which to ground debate. This choice was disingenuous, given that vivisection is the only type of use of animal use in which it could be plausibly argued vital human interests were at stake. In the issue of animal agriculture, for instance, which accounts for countless more non-human lives, all that's at risk is human gustatory preference. Still, it's worth engaging her pro-vivisection position. Never mind that animals are not human analogues and research on them often produces misleading results. Never mind there are alternatives. Never mind that most vivisection is done to test redundant consumer products. The real question is why is it acceptable to torture animals, many of whom undoubtedly have higher levels of consciousness than human infants?

One hopes Penny's perspective on animals have developed since writing this. She has a bright future ahead of her, and it would be tragic for her to continue to see the overwhelming majority of sentient life on this planet as mere resources for humans. Such a stance contradicts the admirable sympathy for the oppressed and exploited which runs through all of her work.

Imprisoned Luxemburg identified with animals  
By Jon Hochschartner

While imprisoned for her opposition to World War I, the German communist leader Rosa Luxemburg identified with non-human animals in her letters on a number of occasions. Perhaps most interestingly she did so in a message to her comrade Sophie Liebknecht, in a letter dated mid-December, 1917, after the Russian Revolution.

Addressing Liebknecht by her nickname 'Sonichka,' Luxemburg described a recent

traumatic experience at Breslau prison. "In the courtyard where I walk, army lorries often arrive, laden with haversacks or old tunics and shirts from the front; sometimes they are stained with blood. They are sent to the women's cells to be mended, and then go back for use in the army," Luxemburg said.

Generally, the army lorries were dragged by horses, but one day she saw buffaloes pulling the loads, who were war 'trophies' from Romania. "The soldier-drivers said that it was very difficult to catch these animals, which had always run wild, and still more difficult to break them in to harness," Luxemburg said. "They had been unmercifully flogged – on the principle of 'vae victis' [woe to the conquered]."

She contrasted the wide spaces and ample food they must have experienced in Romania with the brutal treatment they received when 'tamed.' "There are about a hundred head in Breslau alone," Luxemburg said. "Unsparingly exploited, yoked to heavy loads, they are soon worked to death."

On the particular day which she recalled in the letter, harnessed buffaloes were unable to pull an overburdened lorry into the prison. "The soldier-driver, a brute of a fellow, belaboured the poor beasts so savagely with the butt end of his whip that the wardress at the gate, indignant at the sight, asked him if he had no compassion for animals," Luxemburg said. "No more than anyone has compassion for us men," he answered with an evil smile, and redoubled his blows."

Intentionally or not, the driver's answer spoke to the interconnected nature of different forms of oppression and exploitation, including speciesism. Eventually, the buffaloes were able to drag the heavy lorry into the prison. All of the animals were exhausted, but one was visibly injured.

"The one that was bleeding had an expression on its black face and in its soft black eyes like that of a weeping child – one that has been severely thrashed and does not know why, nor how to escape from the torment of ill-treatment," Luxemburg said. "I stood in front of the team; the beast looked at me: the tears welled from my own eyes. The suffering of a dearly loved brother could hardly have nursed me more profoundly, than I was moved by my impotence in face of this mute agony."

She suspected the injured buffalo yearned for the more free, less trying times in Romania. "Instead, [the buffalo experienced] the hideous street, the foetid stable, the rank hay mingled with mouldy straw, the strange and terrible men – blow upon blow, and blood running from gaping wounds," Luxemburg said. "Poor wretch, I am as powerless, as dumb, as yourself; I am at one with you in my pain, my weakness, and my longing."

Luxemburg's comparison between her prison experience and the suffering of this

injured buffalo is somewhat ridiculous and a reflection of what might be called her human privilege. After all, by her own admission, these animals would quickly be worked to death. Further, she presumably knew and accepted the risks of her anti-war activism. But the comparison clearly comes from a well-intentioned place. Given the deep love she felt for her cat Mimi and examples like this of her inter-species compassion, one suspects she would be a strong advocate for animals had the Marxism of her era been less anthropocentric.

Marx's son-in-law hated animals

By Jon Hochschartner

Paul Lafargue, son-in-law to Karl Marx and a revolutionary in his own right, supported vivisection in the socialist newspaper *L'Egalité* in late 1881. Lafargue, who would die in a suicide pact with Marx's daughter, defended the exploitative practice in a manner that revealed his deep speciesism and scathing disdain for animal advocates.

"When it comes to beasts the bourgeois have the tenderness of angels," Lafargue wrote sneeringly. "Everywhere there are societies for the protection of dogs, cats, sparrows, etc." The subset of animal advocates that most disturbed him apparently were those opposed to animal testing. "Of all these societies the most bothersome, the most hypocritical, the most nauseating is the anti-vivisection society," Lafargue wrote. Interestingly, however, Lafargue had many of the same criticisms of welfarist organizations that modern animal advocates do. "All of these societies are speculations," he wrote. "A certain number of influential members (presidents, secretaries, agents, inspectors, etc) are lavishly maintained on the funds intended for beasts."

Lafargue continued on, taking anti-vivisectionists to task for their supposed pretentiousness. "Pigeon shooting, where thousands of tamed pigeons are wounded and mutilated for the amusement of a few imbecilic aristocrats, is highly approved of by the anti-vivisection society," Lafargue wrote. "Several of its most influential members are big pigeon shooters." Whether these accusations are true I'm unsure. But either way, such gotcha anti-veganism, by which I mean criticism of failures or inconsistencies in animal advocates' personal practice, is inherently *ad hominem*. It's used to ignore the merits of non-human advocates' policy proposals.

Lafargue bemoaned what seems to be public oversight of animal testing, strangely suggesting that this government regulation was capitalist inspired. "The society of anti-vivisectionist animals of England has pulled so many strings that it has obtained from parliament a law prohibiting physiological experiments on living animals without permission from the police," Lafargue wrote, disbelieving. "This

is how the bourgeois treat their illustrious men. They degrade them to the point of putting them under the control of the cops even in the laboratory."

Much of Lafargue's argument rested on a dubious dichotomy between political work on behalf of animals and political work on behalf of the human working class. Animal advocates, "feel themselves to be closer relatives of beasts than of workers," which, according to Lafargue, was a reflection of their supposedly uniform ruling-class station. And yet if this were true, why so often was capitalist exploitation justified by comparing the human proletariat to domesticated animals? Challenging speciesism undermines a common ideological rationale for class domination.

Paraphrasing an English factory inspector, Lafargue wrote that "there exist two kinds of experiments: one practiced by physiologists on a few animals, the other practiced on thousands of men by speculators." As an example of the latter, Lafargue wrote that "two years ago a manufacturer of rice powder in London, Mr. King, falsified his merchandise with clay and arsenical dust." Human infants who were exposed to the powder died of poisoning. Lafargue seemed to suggest that animal advocates, who were opposed to vivisection, were not outraged by this. My guess is Lafargue was attacking a straw man here. But even if he wasn't, his accusation that animal advocates' sympathies were reductionist could easily be flipped to apply to him. Where perhaps anti-vivisectionists were blind to class injustice, he was blind to species injustice. After all, the "few animals" he blithely described as vivisected in the name of anthropocentric science likely had a higher level of consciousness than the human infants poisoned by rice powder.

Ultimately, if indifference to animal exploitation is inherent to socialism as conceived by the likes of Lafargue, it's not a socialism I want to have anything to do with. Animal liberation and the class struggle are linked, if only because capitalists employ speciesism to justify their exploitation of the human masses.

Chomsky envisions vegetarian future  
By Jon Hochschartner

Noam Chomsky, the renowned socialist intellectual, believes that human society will eventually transition to vegetarianism due to concern for animals. Chomsky's academic influence is hard to overstate. According to the Chicago Tribune, in 1993 he was "the most often cited living author. Among intellectual luminaries of all eras, Chomsky placed eighth, just behind Plato and Sigmund Freud."

Also in 1993, Chomsky made the prediction in an interview with Z Magazine co-founder Michael Albert, according to archival-website Third World Traveler. "I don't know if it's a hundred years, but it seems to me if history continues--that's

not at all obvious, that it will--but if society continues to develop without catastrophe on something like the course that you can sort of see over time, I wouldn't be in the least surprised if it moves toward vegetarianism and protection of animal rights," Chomsky said. "In fact, what we've seen over the years--and it's hard to be optimistic in the twentieth century, which is one of the worst centuries in human history in terms of atrocities and terror and so on--but still, over the years, including the twentieth century, there is a widening of the moral realm, bringing in broader and broader domains of individuals who are regarded as moral agents."

While Chomsky said he was not personally vegetarian, he believed the issue of eating animals and vivisectioning them was an important one, "Experiments are torturing animals, let's say," Chomsky said. "That's what they are. So to what extent do we have a right to torture animals for our own good? I think that's not a trivial question."

When Albert asked Chomsky if animal advocates were politically ahead of the curve, Chomsky was noncommittal, but did not dismiss the idea. "It's possible," Chomsky said. "I think I'd certainly keep an open mind on that. You can understand how it could be true. It's certainly a pretty intelligible idea to us. I think one can see the moral force to it." Chomsky went on to trace the evolution of human attitudes toward animal suffering over past few centuries. "You don't have to go back very far to find gratuitous torture of animals," Chomsky said. "The Cartesians thought they had proven that humans had minds and everything else in the world was a machine. So there's no difference between a cat and a watch, let's say. It's just the cat's a little more complicated."

Using a frustratingly limited definition of 'gratuitous torture' Chomsky continued to recount Cartesian speciesism. "You go back to the court in the seventeenth century, and big smart guys who studied all that stuff and thought they understood it would as a sport take Lady So-and-So's favorite dog and kick it and beat it to death and so on and laugh, saying, this silly lady doesn't understand the latest philosophy, which was that it was just like dropping a rock on the floor," Chomsky said. "That's gratuitous torture of animals. It was regarded as if we would ask a question about the torturing of a rock. You can't do it. There's no way to torture a rock. The moral sphere has certainly changed in that respect. Gratuitous torture of animals is no longer considered quite legitimate."

Socialize veterinary care  
By Jon Hochschartner

Refusing treatment to sick animals whose human guardians are unable to pay for care is a "familiar" scenario to veterinarians, according to Phyllis DeGioia, a

writer for the Veterinary Information Network. "Financially strapped owners often turn to euthanasia to alleviate an animal's suffering — sometimes prematurely," DeGioia wrote.

Americans spent \$14.21 billion on veterinary bills for their companion animals last year, according to a projection made by the American Pet Products Association. Despite this seemingly large figure, my guess is that given companion animals' low status and the limited funds of most human guardians, animals are actually given lethal injections quite frequently, when potential treatment plans exist. We need socialized animal care.

It certainly would have helped Americas, a springer Labrador-retriever mix, and her guardian Kim Welch. "In 2007, Americas was diagnosed with a nerve-sheath tumor just millimeters from her heart. Removing the tumor from its difficult location would require amputating the dog's shoulder and foreleg. The risky surgery cost \$7,000 — money that Welch, a hairdresser and single mother, did not have," DeGioia wrote. Ultimately, Americas received surgery and survived, but only after Welch was forced to sell her belongings on eBay and received donations from Canine Cancer Awareness and a mysterious benefactor. Most companion animals and their human guardians are presumably not so lucky.

Now, I should say, that I agree with the vegetarian socialist Henry Stephen Salt who believed that in the future domestication as a whole, including the domestication of companion animals, would and should be rejected. "The injustice done to the pampered lap-dog is as conspicuous, in its way, as that done to the over-worked horse, and both spring from one and the same origin—the fixed belief that the life of a 'brute' has no 'moral purpose,' no distinctive personality worthy of due consideration and development," Salt argued, writing in 1892. "In a society where the lower animals were regarded as intelligent beings, and not as animated machines, it would be impossible for this incongruous absurdity to continue."

Still, within the context of current-day domestication, public non-human healthcare would improve the quality of life of millions of companion animals in this country alone. Progressive groups should emphasize the socialization of veterinary care in their platforms. This would attract animal activists to a leftist coalition at next to no ideological cost, as genuine progressives will support the socialization of significant industries regardless of how it might help non-humans.

In the wake of the Occupy Wall Street movement, in this moment when leftists seem to be converging for the first time in a generation, animal activists need to think about how we fit into broader progressive struggles. What demands can we put forward that might be supported by other leftists who might not yet be on

board with the entire animal-liberation project? I've seen this discussion begin to play out in a number of different outlets.

Writing in *Socialist Worker* recently, for instance, animal advocate Alan Peck offered four short-term demands that he believed anthropocentric progressives should support. "We should demand an end to the most cruel and environmentally destructive farming practices," Peck wrote. "We should demand the repeal of the fascist Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. We should demand an end to massive subsidies for animal agriculture. And we should demand that all people have access to an affordable, healthy plant-based diet."

This seems like a good start, to which I add socializing veterinary care. I encourage other animal advocates to begin asking themselves this question. In the short term, what aspects of the animal rights program can we influence broader progressive organizations to adopt?

What can animal activists learn from the free produce movement?

By Jon Hochschartner

Animal activists who view the practice of personal veganism as a prerequisite to advocating public veganism should know the history of similar perspectives and tactics in other movements at other times. Because animal activists so often associate their struggle with that of abolitionists of human slavery, it's perhaps most worthwhile to focus on the free produce movement.

According to Lawrence B. Glickman, the free produce movement "encouraged consumers to avoid slave-made goods and to purchase products made by 'free labor.' Consciously adopting the strategies of British anti-slavery sugar boycotters of the 1790s, free produce supporters became active in the United States in the 1820s."

The first free produce store opened in Baltimore in 1826, but eventually over 50 stores were situated in eight other states. "Most stores sold clothing and dry goods but some also offered free labor shoes, soaps, ice cream and candy," according to Glickman.

To avoid slave-produced goods, free produce stores often imported sugar from Java, Malaysia and Mexico. This, writes T. Stephen Whitman, "led to higher priced and often lower-quality goods. Efforts to obtain free labor grown cotton and coffee encountered similar problems. In short, purchasers of free produce had to acknowledge that they paid higher prices than for slave-made commodities."

The institution of slavery was not threatened by this individualistic, consumer-

based strategy. "There is little evidence that slaveholders or their political representatives paid much attention to (the free produce movement) and no evidence that it had a discernible economic impact on them," Glickman writes.

By the 1840s, many abolitionists who had previously supported free produce were changing their minds. "The World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, held in London, rejected a call for its supporters to endorse free produce, and other anti-slavery bodies followed suit," according to Whitman.

The famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison eventually opposed the free produce movement, arguing, "These (slavery) productions are so mixed in with the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of the world...so indissolubly connected with the credit and currency of the country--that, to attempt to seek the subversion of slavery by refusing to use them, or to attach moral guilt to the consumer of them, is, in our opinion, alike preposterous and unjust."

Garrison argued, as Glickman summarizes here, that "even if it were possible to divest oneself from all slave-made goods, the quest for what one free produce advocate called 'clean hands' diverted energy from the anti-slavery struggle by shifting the focus to what amounted to a selfish obsession with personal morality."

Abolitionist Elizur Wright argued that the strictures of the free produce movement reduced activists to paralysis. "No anti-slavery agent or other abolitionist must now travel in stage or steam-boat, for the sheets and table cloths of the latter are of cotton," Wright said. "No abolitionist can any longer buy a book, or take a newspaper printed on cotton paper."

Opposing the free produce movement's tactics, abolitionist Wendell Phillips proclaimed he would be perfectly at ease attending the "Great Judgement" in slave-produced clothing. Garrison struck a similar note, saying, abolitionists "claimed for themselves, almost in the name of slaves, the right above all others to wear the product of their blood and travail."

Ultimately, slavery was abolished, with, according to Glickman, little to no help from the free produce movement. According to the sources I've found, most abolitionists did not avoid slave-produced goods. Animal activists should study this historical boycott, as well as other examples of consumer activism, more closely. Some of the lessons might not apply to our movement, but no doubt many will.

Salt was a socialist and pioneering animal advocate  
By Jon Hochschartner



Henry Stephens Salt was a British vegetarian and socialist whose influence on the animal protection movement perhaps cannot be overstated. According to Bernard Unti, Salt's "prescient work 'Animals' Rights' (1892) anticipates virtually all of the important modern arguments in favor of animals' interests." He influenced prominent 20th-century vegetarians such as Mohandas Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy.

Salt, it should be said, was a Fabian socialist, a type harshly criticized by many revolutionaries of the time as being overly reformist. Using gendered language, the Irish republican and socialist James Connolly, for instance, had this to say regarding the subset: "The Fabian Society recruits itself principally among the astute bourgeoisie, whose aim it is to emasculate the working class movement by denying the philosophy of the class struggle, [and] weakening the belief of the workers in the political self-sufficiency of their own class."

Salt upheld animals' right to live, so long as they did not pose a genuine threat to humans, in a way that distinguished him from many of his welfarist contemporaries.

"Even the leading advocates of animals' rights seem to have shrunk from basing their claim on the only argument which can ultimately be held to be a really sufficient one—the assertion that animals, as well as men, though, of course, to a far less extent than men, are possessed of a distinctive individuality, and, therefore, are in justice entitled to live their lives," Salt wrote. "It is of little use to claim 'rights' for animals in a vague general way, if with the same breath we explicitly show our determination to subordinate those rights to anything and everything that can be construed into a human 'want.'"

As an agnostic, Salt believed many ideological justifications for animal exploitation could be traced to religious sources. "The first [rationalization] is the so-called 'religious' notion, which awards immortality to man, but to man alone, thereby furnishing (especially in Catholic countries) a quibbling justification for acts of cruelty to animals," Salt wrote.

Like many animal advocates today, Salt believed our diction helps buttress non-human exploitation. "A word of protest is needed also against such an expression as 'dumb animals,' which, though often cited as 'an immense exhortation to pity,' has in reality a tendency to influence ordinary people in quite the contrary direction, inasmuch as it fosters the idea of an impassable barrier between mankind and their dependents," Salt wrote. "Even the term 'animals,' as applied to the lower races, is incorrect, and not wholly unobjectionable, since it ignores the fact that man is an animal no less than they. My only excuse for using it in this volume is that there is absolutely no other brief term available."

Salt rejected the notion that there was a dichotomy between struggling for the political benefit of animals and struggling for the political benefit of humans. "It is an entire mistake to suppose that the rights of animals are in any way antagonistic to the rights of men," He wrote. "Let us not be betrayed for a moment into the specious fallacy that we must study human rights first, and leave the animal question to solve itself hereafter; for it is only by a wide and disinterested study of *both* subjects that a solution of either is possible."

Salt's conception of animal rights was progressive enough that he even believed the keeping of companion animals would be rejected in the future. "The injustice done to the pampered lap-dog is as conspicuous, in its way, as that done to the over-worked horse, and both spring from one and the same origin—the fixed belief that the life of a 'brute' has no 'moral purpose,' no distinctive personality worthy of due consideration and development," Salt wrote. "In a society where the lower animals were regarded as intelligent beings, and not as animated machines, it would be impossible for this incongruous absurdity to continue."

Finally, as a socialist, Salt believed the exploitation of animals would continue so long as capitalism existed. "In the rush and hurry of a competitive society," Salt wrote, "where commercial profit is avowed to be the main object of work, and where the well-being of men and women is ruthlessly sacrificed to that object, what likelihood is there that the lower animals will not be used with a sole regard to the same predominant purpose?"

Dismissive term for anti-animal socialists needed

By Jon Hochschartner

Vegan socialists need a dismissive term for those on the anthropocentric left. It could be used in much the same way as socialist-feminists use the portmanteaus "brocialist" and "manarchist" to undermine socialists with reactionary gender politics.

I'm awful at coining catchy, new terms, as this task requires. And I imagine that anti-speciesist socialists as whole are capable of brainstorming something much better. But as an initial suggestion, I'd like to offer the term "corpsocialist" to define those on the anti-animal left, which is obviously an amalgam of the words "corpse" and "socialist." I hope the portmanteau would bring to mind the eviscerated bodies of the countless animals whose lives and suffering most leftists ignore or minimize.

In a 2013 letter to Socialist Worker, International Socialist Organization member Benjamin Silverman claimed to have coined the term brocialist. "[It] came about some two years ago in one of my many arguments on Reddit forums, a noted

Internet hive of sexism and misogyny," Silverman said. "The word 'manarchist' was becoming popular as a means to describe and call out the prevalence of sexists within the anarchist community, and I felt that there was a need for an equivalent epithet for the socialist movement. So 'brocialist' and 'brocialism' was what I came up with."

Speaking to the New Republic, progressive journalist Sarah Jaffe said brocialists reduce feminist priorities to a distraction from the class struggle. "Brocialists," Jaffe said, are "guys who are so enamored of their own radicalness or progressiveness or whateverness that they are convinced they can do no wrong."

In an article for the New Statesmen, left-wing writer Laurie Penny engaged in a dialogue with Marxist author Richard Seymour about brocialism and manarchism.

"My experience is that 'brocialists' don't openly embrace patriarchy; they deny it's a problem," Seymour said. "Or they minimise it. They direct your attention elsewhere: you should be focusing on class. You're being divisive. You're just middle class (quelle horreur!). Or they attack a straw 'feminism' that is supposedly 'bourgeois' and has nothing to say about class or other axes of oppression."

Penny compared the brocialist to his equivalent in the anarchist community. "The brocialist's more chaotic cousin is, of course, the manarchist, who displays many of the same traits in terms of blindness to privilege, casual sexism and a refusal to acknowledge structural gender oppression, but has a slightly different reading list and a more monochrome wardrobe," Penny said.

So how might one use the term corpsocialist, or whatever term we decide will better dismiss speciesist socialists? Let me provide an example. At the 2013 Edward Said Memorial Lecture, Noam Chomsky, perhaps the most widely-respected socialist living in the United States, was asked his opinion on animal rights. While Chomsky seems to have expressed more enlightened views on the topic in the past, what he had to offer that day was particularly defensive and reactionary.

"Well, just out of curiosity, do you kill insects, like mosquitos when they're bothering you?" Chomsky asked the questioner to widespread laughter from the presumably omnivorous audience. "Or do you think when mosquitoes are carrying malaria we ought to develop means to kill them off?"

Hearing Chomsky's response, for instance, one might say, "God, for someone with vegetarian kids, he sure is a corpsocialist." Now, let's make corpsocialist happen. For a portmanteau, to quote the film "Mean Girls," it's so fetch!

Seymour refreshingly sympathetic to animal liberation  
By Jon Hochschartner

For someone who runs a blog called Lenin's Tomb, Richard Seymour, author of "The Liberal Defense of Murder," has relatively modern views of non-human animals. While by no means advocating an end to animal exploitation, and benefiting from the low expectations created by the typically hateful speciesism of his socialist milieu, Seymour sounded surprisingly sympathetic to animal-rights thought in a late 2012 review of Alasdair Cochrane's "An Introduction to Animals and Political Theory."

For those not familiar with his work, Seymour is one of the most widely respected thinkers among the emerging generation of socialists. Besides authoring a number of well-received books, and running the aforementioned blog, which is influential, he writes for the Guardian and Al Jazeera, among other publications. Seymour's public break with the British Socialist Workers Party have led many—who wouldn't otherwise—to question the efficacy of the sect form, which stresses the need for top-down organization and ideological uniformity. His resignation inspired reform efforts elsewhere, exemplified by the Renewal Faction, a group which was ultimately expelled from the United States' International Socialist Organization.

Seymour's review, which appeared in the London School of Economics and Political Science's Review of Books, argued that, "our relationships with other animals have been under-theorised in most political traditions," including his own Marxism. Continuing, Seymour describes critical animal studies as a "neglected field of political discourse" and "a highly interesting issue." For Seymour, the dearth of socialist theory on species domination needn't be the case.

"Emancipatory ideologies should, in theory, be well-placed to handle animal rights," He said. "But that isn't always necessarily so. Marxism, for example, is a profoundly humanist doctrine, not known for its concern with animal rights. There are resources within Marxism for addressing animal rights, emphasising their exploitation and un-freedom, but that depends on Marxists being convinced that there is anything illegitimate about the exploitation and un-freedom of animals."

Seymour was most impressed by the contributions feminists have made to the field of critical animal studies. "It is among feminists that some of the most intriguing and telling writing on animals has been produced," Seymour said. "Carolyn Merchant famously argued that the subjugation of nature heralded by the 'scientific revolution' and its major apostles such as Francis Bacon, was bound up with the emergence of a violent patriarchy. The exploitation of animals is thus an expression of masculinist assertion over a feminised earth. Similarly, Carol Adams

maintained that the reduction of animals to 'meat' for consumption is part of modern masculinity, and of the same process that reduces women to 'meat' for consumption."

Seymour concludes his review with an apparent endorsement for intersectional politics that take the question of species into consideration. "The inter-dependence of all animals, the relations between the oppression of human and non-human animals, is potentially one of the most productive areas of inquiry," he said. One hopes he will contribute to this inquiry, as he is uniquely qualified to do so on the socialist left. Obviously he is a brilliant thinker. But perhaps more importantly, his credentials as a Marxist are unimpeachable. Were he to publicly support revolutionary change for animals, or even just a robust reformism, he would help tip the scales against the most virulently speciesist elements of the socialist left.

Is there any evidence Goldman wrote pro-animal article?

By Jon Hochschartner

Imagine my excitement as a vegan socialist, or whatever we decide to call ourselves, when I read the great American anarchist Emma Goldman had written an article that was deeply sympathetic to non-human animals and endorsed vegetarianism. Unfortunately there doesn't appear to be any evidence Goldman wrote the article in question, which was a review of Upton Sinclair's novel 'The Jungle.'

Goldman was, according to future FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, one of the "most dangerous anarchists" in America. She was arrested more often than can be recounted here, for allegedly inciting a riot of the unemployed among many other things. She was a feminist who, according to a number of historians, played a mentoring role to Margaret Sanger, the birth-control pioneer who founded Planned Parenthood. She was an atheist and an early advocate of gay rights. Unlike many of her leftist contemporaries, Goldman early on recognized the seeds of totalitarianism planted by the Bolsheviks in Russia.

Anne Fernihough identifies Goldman as the author of the 1906 review, which appeared in Goldman's publication *Mother Earth*, in Fernihough's 2013 book 'Freewomen and Supermen: Edwardian Radicals and Literary Modernism.' But all of the other sources I've come across identify the author merely by the pseudonym Veritas.

Using the slaughterhouse as a metaphor, Veritas saw connections between the treatment of animals and the treatment of humans in Sinclair's novel. "It is for the most part a tale of the abattoirs, those unspeakable survivals in our Christendom in which man reeks his savage and sensual will on the lesser animals," the unnamed

writer said. "Indirectly it is a story of the moral abattoirs of politics, economics, society, religion and the home, where the victims are of the species human, and where man's inhumanity to man is as selfish and relentless as his age-long cruelty to his brothers and sisters just behind him in the great procession."

In calling for public vegetarianism, Veritas tried to give a sense of the overwhelming scope of animal exploitation. "This author uses the squeal, or, rather, the wild death shrieks of agony of the ten millions of living creatures tortured to death every year in Chicago and the other tens of millions elsewhere, to pander to the old brutal, inhuman thirst of humanity for a diet of blood," the anonymous writer said. "The billions of the slain have found a voice at last, and if I mistake not this cry of anguish from the 'killing-beds' shall sound on until men, whose ancestors once were cannibals, shall cease to devour even the corpses of their murdered animal relatives."

It's very possible Fernihough has access to information that I don't, that suggests Veritas was in fact Emma Goldman. Given my politics, I would love this to be case. But sadly I think it's more likely Fernihough made an error of attribution, something that happens to all researchers. There is nothing published under Goldman's own name I've come across that suggests she might have been sympathetic to animal rights. Like all public figures of a certain stature, this wouldn't be the first time Goldman was incorrectly quoted. Her most famous saying, "If I can't dance, it's not my revolution," of which there are many slight variations, is apocryphal, according to Alix Kates Shulman, for instance.

Vegan socialists need their own publication, unifying term  
By Jon Hochschartner

In a recent article for the Weekly Worker, a publication of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Maciej Zurowski suggested that Assoziation Dämmerung, a Marxist animal liberation group, establish a publication centered on the intersection of species and class.

"I would suggest you write more theory, or perhaps set up a publication where people can follow your debates," Zurowski said. While this suggestion sounds as if it was made with a certain degree of condescension, I think it's nevertheless good advice. Unfortunately, the representatives of Assoziation Dämmerung, who seem in many respects to be at the cutting edge of vegan socialism, dismissed the idea.

Christin Bernhold believed such a publication would be politically isolating. "I am convinced that we can only work in the labour movement and on the existing left if we want our ideas to become popular," Bernhold said. "We will not have any

success if we only print a couple of pamphlets or even a regular publication of the anti-speciesist Marxist left and do not work with the existing left."

Meanwhile, Susann Witt-Stahl did not seem to think such a publication was even possible at the present time. "As to a publication, I do not think we are in a position to have one," Witt-Stahl said. "You are forgetting that as Marxists, we are a tiny minority of the animal liberation movement. The majority adheres to some bourgeois animal ethics, and there are even those who look at all meat-eaters and meat industry workers as their enemies."

I sympathize with Bernhold's concerns regarding political isolation, but I believe that vegan socialists can simultaneously have their own journal or blog, while contributing to conversations in broader socialist spaces. Not only do I believe this is possible, but I think it's necessary, given that vegan-socialist perspectives are generally rejected in broader socialist publications, except once every few years when the 'animal question' is allowed to be rehashed in public. Further, there needs to be some sort of gathering spot for vegan socialists. As it currently stands, internet users might find a few atomized articles on the subject of vegan socialism, but there is no place where one can find and engage with like-minded people and ideas. While I cannot speak to Witt-Stahl's German milieu, I can say that I believe, given the modest interest some of my more popular articles on the subject of vegan socialism have garnered, there is enough of an audience to sustain a small vegan-socialist journal or blog.

Which leads us to a second question. If vegan socialists were to create such a publication, they would need a unifying term with which to describe themselves. Many other socialist subsets have such terms. There are 'socialist feminists' and 'eco-socialists,' for instance. The unwieldiness of available options are exemplified by the subtitle of Animal Liberation Front founder Ronnie Lee's blog, 'thoughts of a socialist animal liberationist.' Talk about a mouthful.

To a degree this is a problem the broader animal movement suffers from. The most commonly used term to describe anti-speciesists is probably 'animal rights activist,' which, already three words long, does not lend itself to additional political specification. Most ideologies have one-word terms for their followers, like 'feminists,' 'environmentalists,' and 'socialists.' Some in the animal movement have attempted to appropriate the term 'abolitionists' from the struggle against human slavery. But ultimately no one outside the movement recognizes this term in relation to animal advocates, so I'd argue it's relatively useless.

Some readers may think I've already used the best term, 'vegan socialist,' throughout this article. And perhaps they're right. But as I've written elsewhere, I question the need for animal advocates to practice personal veganism so as to

agitate for public veganism. I wonder if our obsession with individual consumer choices is a distraction from the real struggle, as many abolitionists of human slavery came to regard the free produce movement. So unless it was made explicit that the veganism in the term 'vegan socialist' was not necessarily prefigurative, the term would not be my first choice. Further, humans adopt veganism for a number of different reasons, sometimes none having to do with interspecies solidarity. Establishing a shared political identity based around a lifestyle, rather than beliefs held in common, is precarious at best.

Does Sawant's diet reflect her species politics?

By Jon Hochschartner

If the American revolutionary left held an annual award show akin to the Oscars — I'm imagining they'd be called the Debsies — newly elected Seattle City council member Kshama Sawant would undoubtedly win the category of Best Socialist of the year. So it might surprise anthropocentric leftists to learn that she may be, to some degree or another, vegan.

Running on a platform of raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, the Socialist Alternative candidate beat her Democratic opponent in last year's election to become the first socialist to win a city-wide vote in Seattle since 1916. What was particularly remarkable about her campaign was that though her immediate demands, such as raising the minimum wage, were reformist, she ran openly as a socialist. Animal advocates should note that if this strategy were translated into the animal-rights milieu, it would be dismissed as 'new welfarist.'

Sawant recently suggested to KIRO radio's Rachel Belle that she cooked vegan meals, in an interview primarily focused on healthy eating. "It's possible to make healthy food that tastes really great," Sawant said. "I take it on like a challenge. Can I cook mostly vegan, low fat, organic food that tastes like a bomb? That's not easy to do." Further, in a recent entry, blogger Jeff Widmer refers to Sawant as a "vegan friend."

As I've mentioned elsewhere, I view animal exploitation as a systemic problem to which there can not be individualistic solutions. So whether Sawant is vegan or to what degree she personally abstains from animal products doesn't really concern me. Her diet is only of interest in that it might be a reflection of an anti-speciesist worldview.

Of course, many socialists, like many non-socialists, reduce their personal consumption of animal products for reasons completely unrelated to animal defense. The socialist Upton Sinclair, for instance, was a vegetarian for health reasons. "It has always seemed to me that human beings have a right to eat meat, if



meat is necessary for their best development, either physical or mental," Sinclair said. "I have never had any sympathy with that 'humanitarianism' which tells us it is our duty to regard pigs and chickens as our brothers." Similarly, the anarchist Luisa Capetillo was a vegetarian and operated a vegetarian restaurant because she believed animal flesh carried harmful toxins. There is no indication, so far as I can find, that her consumer choices had anything to do with sympathy toward non-human rights.

So it's quite possible that Sawant's diet, whatever it might be, is not a reflection of solidarity with animals at all, which is one of the glaring pitfalls of basing a shared political identity on lifestyle choices rather than public-policy proposals held in common. My guess is that if Sawant does hold anti-speciesist views, she will play them relatively close to the vest for political reasons, which is disappointing, but given our culture's violent anthropocentrism, inevitable for someone seeking elected office. Still, I encourage vegan socialists in the Seattle area, if given the opportunity, to ask Sawant what her views on domestication are, and what limited actions she can take on behalf of animals in her new role as city council member.

Critique of capitalist environmentalism applies to prefigurative veganism  
By Jon Hochschartner

In an early section of his phenomenal book, "Ecology and Socialism: Solutions to Capitalist Ecological Crisis," Chris Williams critiques former Vice President Al Gore's influential film on global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth," from a socialist perspective. Animal liberationists should consider this criticism as the points Williams makes about capitalist-inspired efforts to prevent climate change through voluntary lifestyle changes by individuals could and should be applied to similar capitalist-inspired solutions to animal exploitation.

"Not only are some of the solutions proposed by the mainstream environmental movement misguided, but there is often an enormous chasm between the problems environmentalists describe and the solutions many of them propose," Williams said. "While there are many examples, Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is a prime case in point. After predicting planet-gone-wild climate gyrations from the continued unsustainable production of greenhouse gases, Gore tells us to consume a bit less stuff, change our light bulbs, make sure our car tires are properly inflated, and bike to work. The gap between ends and means is so absurd as to be laughable."

In a similar way, animal liberationists speak to the public about violence on an incomprehensible scale against animals, before arguing the solution is to buy expensive vegan cupcakes and convince some friends to do the same. Most of the public who are sympathetic to anti-speciest politics correctly recognize their

individual sacrifice will make no genuine impact on animal-exploitation industries and understandably forgo what is ultimately a selfish obsession with personal purity.

"More insidiously," Williams continued, "in a move of political jujitsu, the film shifts the weight of change from corporate polluters to individuals." To view the capitalist, who personally makes millions of dollars a year destroying the environment, as equally complicit in the crisis of global warming as the underpaid and overworked laborer who buys the former's products, primarily because they are the cheapest and most convenient, is ignorant and offensive. It's the exact prism through which the rich want the issue seen, because it exonerates them for what they are overwhelmingly responsible. Further, it's the working class who will disproportionately suffer the consequences of global warming and the like, so to argue that they will in some way 'benefit' from environmental devastation is short sighted.

One can see a similar class-blindness at work in the animal-rights movement. By focusing on the point of consumption, animal liberationists, whether they intend to or not, suggest the capitalist, who makes millions of dollars a year abusing animals, is equally complicit in animal exploitation as the underpaid and overworked laborer who buys the former's products, primarily because they are cheap, convenient and culturally valued. Again, it's through this lense that the rich want the issue examined. Further, I'd argue the belief that the working class 'benefit' from animal exploitation is dubious at best, given the ways speciesism is used to legitimize capitalist domination, and the obvious negative health and environmental consequences of animal agriculture, which, again, workers disproportionately suffer.

"Much of the environmental movement in the North is consumed by arguing for ordinary people to make sacrifices in order to save the planet," Williams said. "They then wonder why more people aren't on the demonstration against global warming and why the movement isn't more diverse." This state of affairs should sound sadly familiar to animal advocates. Ultimately, to change it, we must focus our anti-speciesist work on the point of production rather than that of consumption. This means giving up the notion of prefigurative veganism as necessary or even relevant to movement activity. Giving this up, of course, does not mean abandoning the animal-liberation project anymore than saying one doesn't have to live like the subject of the film "No Impact Man" to be a committed or radical environmentalist. Rather it merely means giving up a classist strategy that doesn't work but makes us feel good about ourselves.

Zizek is reformist on animal question  
By Jon Hochschartner

The public statements of Marxist writer Slavoj Žižek, which are sometimes difficult to interpret given his predilection for irony and contrarianism, suggest he supports a lukewarm reformism in regards to the treatment of animals, which, pathetically, makes his species politics more progressive than many socialists. It should be mentioned that though the Slovenian cultural critic may be popular on the left, he's not necessarily respected there. Louis Proyect, for instance, has dismissed him as the intellectual equivalent of a "shock jock," while Noam Chomsky has suggested Žižek's work is "theoretical posturing which has no content."

To begin, there's a widely shared clip on YouTube, which appears to be an excerpt from a 2005 documentary on Žižek, in which Žižek said, speaking of vegetarians, "Degenerates, degenerates. You will turn into monkeys." The statement is so absurdly over the top, one must assume it was intended as humor. Žižek seemed to be more serious in a 2010 lecture at the Birkbeck Institute, in which he appeared to empathize to a limited degree with animal victims of human violence, while explicitly distancing himself from the most prominent contemporary thinker associated with animal defense.

"My next example is animal rights," Žižek started. "I mean I am not becoming Peter Singer, don't be afraid of that." Whatever criticisms animal liberationists have of Singer, we should be aware Žižek almost certainly used the Australian philosopher as a stand-in for all opposed to anthropocentrism. While Žižek appears to have said some quite complimentary things about Singer in the past, his prefatory statement here should be interpreted as an attempt at species bonding, in which Žižek reassured the audience of his continued support for human supremacy, before launching into a tepid criticism of animal exploitation. "We know what we are doing to animals," Žižek continued. "You know how chicken are grown. You know how pigs are grown. It's a nightmare, but how do we survive? We know it, but we act as if we do not know."

Before describing the horrific results of vivisection, Žižek warns the audience he is overly emotional about the topic, as if his reaction was unjustified in the context of animal treatment. "And here I'm a little bit sentimental," Žižek said. "I remember years ago I saw a photo of a cat, immediately after this cat was submitted to some rather unpleasant experiment." His description of the experiment as 'rather unpleasant' is absurd given the brutal description that follows. One might similarly say, after seeing a beaten human face resulting from a batched mugging, that the victim had a 'rather unpleasant' walk in the park.

"This experiment was under the pretext of testing how a living organism — how much pressure and hits can it endure," Žižek said. "It's not immediately clear to

me how this would help people." One can infer here Žižek believed, with obvious anthropocentrism, that if the experiment somehow assisted humans it would be justified. "The cat was put in a centrifuge and it turned like crazy," Žižek said, before making a genuinely perceptive observation into non-human perspective. "What you then got at the end was a cat with literally broken limbs, and most shocking to me most of the hair was gone. But it was still alive and just looking into the camera. And here I would like to ask the Hegelian question. What did the cat see in us? What kind of a monster?"

The year prior, in his book "Violence: Six Sideways Reflections," Žižek made a similar point regarding our willful ignorance of animal exploitation. "What about animals slaughtered for our consumption?" He said. "Who among us would be able to continue eating pork chops after visiting a factory farm in which pigs are half-blind and cannot even properly walk, but are just fattened to be killed?" While obviously preferable to endorsing the heightened suffering in industrial agriculture, Žižek's condemnation specifically of factory farms disappointingly suggests he might approve of less modern and potentially more 'gentle' methods of killing non-humans. Were we to move such reformism onto the terrain of the worker's movement, he would no doubt recognize and oppose it.

Žižek is so prolific it would be near impossible to review all of his writing and lectures that touch on species politics. Frankly he is held in low-enough regard by many on the left that it would not be worth the time. But I believe the examples I've provided here are representative. He's a reformist on the animal question, which to the left's discredit, puts him ahead of many socialists.

In practical terms today, animal activists are all reformists  
By Jon Hochschartner

At the 2013 Subversive Festival in Croatia, Marxist writer Richard Seymour was asked by an interviewer whether he believed the dichotomy between revolutionaries and reformists in the context of class struggle was useful. His answer, I think, would help inform similar debates held between animal advocates who seek for non-humans revolutionary and reformist change, or what is also called abolitionist and welfarist change.

"Well I think the categories matter," Seymour said. "I think there is a difference between reformists and revolutionaries. But the problem is that in practical terms today, we are all reformists in terms of what we can actually do." It's my firm belief the animal movement needs a strong dose of such sobriety, and we must realistically assess the political landscape in which we find ourselves. Abolition, animal liberation, species revolution — whatever one might call it — is simply not on the table at the present moment. We can delude ourselves that this is not the

case or curse our luck for being born into an era in which the possibilities of change for non-humans is, at least for the immediate future, rather limited. But ultimately this won't change anything or help animals. Like it or not, all that's possible in the present moment is reform, which in practical terms makes us all reformists, whatever we might call ourselves.

Still, Seymour believed the categories mattered to some degree. "There was an old argument made by Alasdair MacIntyre who used to be a member of the International Socialist Group, a Trotskyist group," Seymour said. "He basically said that there was a law, a little known law, known as the diminishing returns of socialism, which meant that basically under capitalism there was a pressure for everybody to act somewhat to the right of their nominal beliefs. Therefore the only people who would probably take a radical stance regarding capitalism would actually be revolutionaries. In practical terms that often turns out to be the case." If I'm interpreting Seymour correctly here, what he's saying is that in conservative periods, revolutionaries are limited to pursuing reforms and reformists generally don't take an oppositional stance at all. No doubt the same holds true for abolitionists and welfarists within the context of the animal question.

"In real terms there is very little in the way of a revolutionary agency that we could activate," Seymour said. "So therefore most of the time what we're doing is trying to advocate reforms that will strengthen the agencies that would be capable of being mobilized in the event of a revolutionary situation." In other words, there is simply no revolutionary potential in the present historical moment, whether it be for the working class or animals. So revolutionaries are limited to pursuing reforms not due to lack of commitment or incorrect theory, but because reform is all that is possible in the current era.

"I think the sociologist Goran Therborn had some insight here," Seymour said. "He pointed out that really being revolutionary or reformist for most of the working class is not a question of ideology or subjectivity. I mean that's part of it. But the most important question is the context, the circumstance. Whether they're revolutionized or not depends whether or not they're in a situation which seems to demand a revolution. And that's really the appropriate way to think about it."

I believe this point regarding the historical context being more important than ideology in revolutionizing the human masses against capitalism is crucial in relation to understanding how the human masses will be revolutionized against domestication. So the question is: how can we create a situation in which revolution for animals seems inevitable? To me, the most obvious situation which would begin to produce such anti-speciesist consciousness would be one in which in-vitro meat, or similar analogs, required less labor to produce and were gastronomically superior than the slaughtered flesh of animals. We are not yet at

this point, but we can certainly speed it along by pouring the funds to which the animal movement has access into relevant research, among other things.

"To me, most of the time these dichotomies are used in a sectarian and moralizing way," Seymour said, concluding his remarks on the usefulness of the categorizing revolutionaries and reformists. In a similar way, I believe equivalent dichotomies within the animal movement are unnecessarily divisive and used to prematurely shut down debate regarding strategy, given that reform, like it or not, is all that's possible at the present moment in terms of the exploitation of animals.

Ehrenreich trivialized ape-personhood campaigns  
By Jon Hchschartner

In condemning capitalist inequality, writer Barbara Ehrenreich honorary co-chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, trivialized efforts to extend legal rights of personhood to apes in progressive magazine *The Nation*. It's particularly disappointing, given the context of her article, because it's clear she should know better. Ehrenreich is perhaps best known for her 2001 book *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.

"Many humans in this country may be similarly motivated to seek chimp status," Ehrenreich joked in the 2007 piece. "There are individuals who commit crimes in order to gain access to the free food and medical care available in a prison. How much easier and more pleasant to have oneself declared a chimp and win entry to the soft life of a zoo animal! Not only are the guards friendly, but one's enclosure has been designed with far more psychological forethought than the average office or cubicle."

The article's tone was satirical, so it's unclear to what degree, if any, she believed animals held captive in zoos have it easy or enjoy situations preferable to human office workers. But that she might have thought this, and it's not clear from the piece, is troubling. Either way, her humor traded on speciesism to stoke class resentment, a strategy for economic justice that should be opposed by animal advocates. Further, from a socialist standpoint, the jokes propagated what Marxists call 'false consciousness,' in that they directed proletarian anger away from capitalists, the genuine exploiters of the working class, and toward animals and those humans who defend them.

Not much later in the article, Ehrenreich returned to the same comedic well. Again, it's unclear to what degree she was kidding as she suggested the rightful order of society has been tipped upside down and captive animals enjoy a better quality of life than humans. "Once apes achieve these protections, American humans are going to want them too," she said. "I'm thinking food, shelter, and

medical-veterinary care."

Some animal advocates criticize campaigns for ape personhood as anthropocentric, given they focus on those species most similar to humans. This criticism is of course true, but it ignores that change generally happens incrementally and the lowest-hanging fruit is always achieved first. Additionally, such criticism doesn't recognize the possibilities a small hole in the legal barrier dividing humans from animals might open up. These efforts deserve the support of anti-speciesists and leftists like Ehrenreich. That she didn't take a position on the issue, besides using it to make unrelated points regarding capitalist injustice, is particularly frustrating given the knowledge she demonstrates in the article.

"We share 99 percent of our genome with them, making it possible for chimps to accept human blood transfusions and kidney donations," Ehrenreich said. "Despite their vocal limitations, they communicate easily with each other and can learn human languages. They use tools and live in groups that display behavioral variations attributable to what anthropologists recognize as culture. And we may be a lot closer biologically than Darwin ever imagined. Last May, paleontologists reported evidence of inter-breeding between early humans and chimps as recently as 5 million years ago."

Continuing, Ehrenreich makes a compelling case against what could be easily mistaken as the whole of speciesism. "Of course, what makes humans especially obnoxious is our tendency to believe in our absolute superiority over all creatures," Ehrenreich said. "We alone, of all species, have come up with religions and philosophies that declare us uniquely deserving of global hegemony. Yet one by one, our 'unique' human traits have turned out to be shared: Chimpanzees have culture; dolphins make art (in the form of bubble patterns); female vampire bats share food with their friends; male baboons will die to defend their troop; rats have recently demonstrated a capability for reflection that resembles consciousness. We are animals, and they are us."

And yet despite this insight, her article as a whole lazily attempted to raise human laborers up by minimizing the exploitation of animals. It was disappointing to see from Ehrenreich, whose work I otherwise greatly respect.

Guevara defended animal space flight  
By Jon Hochschartner

In late 1957, in the midst of the Cuban revolution, the iconic revolutionary Che Guevara defended the Soviet Union's plan to launch a homeless dog found on the streets of Moscow into space, on a flight in which there was no possibility of survival. Laika, the stray in question, was being used as an involuntary test

subject, to pave the way for human space travel.

She was only three years old when she died and described by Vladimir Yazdovsky, one of the scientists involved, as "quiet and charming." Just prior to launch, Yazdovsky took Laika home to play with his children in an apparent moment of sympathy. "I wanted to do something nice for her," he said. "She had so little time left to live."

Exactly how and when Laika died was something of a mystery for many years as Soviet publications gave conflicting accounts. "Some reports claimed she had died after about a week when the satellite's batteries lost power and could no longer circulate oxygen," according to Colin Burgess and Chris Dubbs. "Others suggested that she had been euthanized with poisoned food, poisoned gas or a poisoned injection. Later, Soviet sources hinted that Laika had died after several hours when her cabin overheated," a claim that was validated in 1993.

In Jon Lee Anderson's magnificent biography of Guevara, the author quotes from an article the Argentine revolutionary wrote in *El Cubano Libre*, the guerrilla newspaper, regarding Laika's planned fate. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate the full version of the piece, so Anderson's quotations of Guevara are the only ones to which I have access. "Compassion fills our soul at the thought of the poor animal that will die gloriously to further a cause it doesn't understand," Guevara said, before attempting to link American animal advocates' outrage at Laika's treatment to their government's support for the murderous regime he was fighting. "But we haven't heard of any philanthropic American society parading in front of the noble edifice asking clemency for our guajiros, and they die in good numbers, machine-gunned by the P-47 and B-26 airplanes...or riddled by the troop's competent M-Is. Or is that within the context of political convenience a Siberian dog is worth more than a thousand Cuban guajiros?"

Painting with a broad brush, Guevara seems to suggest those Americans who opposed Laika's exploitation supported their governments efforts to repress the Cuban people. I have no idea to what degree this is accurate. Guevara was presumably correct there was a large amount of political expediency involved in American animal advocates protesting Soviet testing, given the United States' space program was exploiting non-human subjects as well. Perhaps these activists were equally vociferous in their protest of their own government's experiments, but I doubt it. Ultimately though, none of this is relevant to the question of whether the Russians should have killed Laika to serve their interests. Guevara's defense of animal abuse seems to have rested entirely on the fallacious argument we know commonly as "two wrongs make a right," which, as we all learn as children, is not the case.



Decades later, another of the scientist's involved in Laika's killing expressed remorse for what he had done, albeit still within the speciesist framework that the experiment might have been justifiable had the Soviets gained more from it. "Work with animals is a source of suffering to all of us," Oleg Gazenko said. "We treat them like babies who cannot speak. The more time passes, the more I'm sorry about it. We did not learn enough from the mission to justify the death of the dog."

### In search of the vegetarian Bolshevik By Jon Hochschartner

Numerous sources suggest vegetarianism was banned in the Soviet Union. But one must assume this wasn't immediately the case, as a prominent member of the Bolshevik Old Guard, meaning one active prior to the 1917 revolution, was a vegetarian. Whether his dietary choices were due to solidarity with non-human animals or some other reason is unfortunately not clear.

In early 1914, Vladimir Lenin wrote a letter in which he queried the recipient regarding Alexander Fyodorovich Ilyin-Zhenevsky, apparently a party member who abstained from consuming meat. "What has become of that young Bolshevik, the Witmerist, the highly-strung vegetarian, whom I saw at your place last year?" Lenin asked, with obvious condescension that could perhaps be interpreted as jocular.

According to Brian Pierce, who translated Ilyin's work 'The Bolsheviks in Power: Reminiscences of the Year 1918,' Ilyin "defended his views on this subject [of vegetarianism] against Lenin's criticisms: Lenin joked that Ilyin might provoke a fresh split in the Party, forming a faction of Bolshevik vegetarians." Lenin was obviously kidding here, as Pierce notes, but it wouldn't seem to be much of a stretch to read Lenin's comments as suggesting there were other vegetarians in the Bolshevik ranks who have simply been lost to history.

Ilyin "served Soviet Russia," according to Pierce, "in six main capacities -- as journalist, soldier, military administrator, historian, diplomat and chess-player." He died in 1941, but it's unclear whether he perished under Joseph Stalin's purges or as a result of the Second World War. "Volume 5 of the 'Soviet Historical Encyclopedia,' published in 1964, states that he was 'subjected to illegal repression during the period of the cult of personality' -- which may or may not mean that he was actually executed. Volume 10 of the 'Large Soviet Encyclopedia,' published in 1972, says that he 'died during the siege of Leningrad,' and Botvinnik, in the book already

quoted, specifies that 'he perished from a German bomb at Novaya Ladoga,'" according to Pierce.

As mentioned earlier, many sources suggest vegetarianism was eventually banned in Russia. To what degree this information is a product of Red Scare hysteria, I'm unsure. After all, such a law would presumably be impossible to enforce outside of shuttering explicitly vegetarian restaurants and organizations. The website of the International Vegetarian Union suggests this was the case: "The Soviet State authorities considered vegetarianism as a pseudoscientific theory that reflected the bourgeois ideology and therefore harmed to Soviet people. In 1929 the last vegetarian society in Moscow was closed...The leaders of the vegetarian societies were persecuted, many of them arrested and sentenced."

I'm curious to know when the crackdown on vegetarianism started. While I'm far from an uncritical admirer of Lenin, I suspect it began with the rise of Stalin, as this would fit a pattern of increased conservatism in Russia following Lenin's death. Homosexuality, effectively legalized under Lenin, was outlawed in the 1930s under Stalin. Similarly, abortions were legalized under Lenin, but again outlawed in the 1930s by Stalin.

Are animals part of the working class?  
By Jon Hochschartner

Vegan socialist Jason Hribal's challenge to anthropocentric leftism, from a 2003 issue of the academic journal *Labor History*, in which Hribal attempted to redefine the proletariat to include animals, was admirably ambitious in its goals. Unfortunately, in its execution the challenge was woefully under-theorized, with Hribal merely asserting that non-humans should be considered part of the working class, and to the extremely limited degree he attempted to back up his argument, Hribal relied on a source that many socialists will not take seriously.

In his 20-page article, only the last five pages broached the question of whether animals should be considered part of the working class, and within that section the topic was touched on surprisingly briefly given the implications Hribal's claim would presumably have on socialist theory. To defend his position, so far as I can tell, Hribal primarily leaned on two quotations from the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon — and not much else. "Thus," Hribal quoted the Frenchman saying, "the horse, who draws our coaches, and the ox who draws our carts produce with us, but are not associated with us; we take their product, but do not share it with them." In another passage, Hribal quoted Proudhon saying, "The

animals and laborers whom we employ hold the same relation to us. Whatever we do for them, we do, not from a sense of justice, but out of pure benevolence."

Needless to say, this is pretty-thin vegan gruel, especially given it's supposed to upend a century or more of socialist theory. Further, even if relying on a single, long-dead leftist's words were convincing, relying on a couple of quotes from Proudhon to win anthropocentric socialists to Hribal's view was a poor choice, since many hold the anarchist in low regard. Among other things, as Todd Chretien pointed out, Proudhon was opposed to strikes, ridiculously stating, "It is impossible, I declare, for strikes followed by an increase in wages not to culminate in a general rise in prices: this is as certain as two and two make four."

In response to Hribal, the vegan socialist Bob Torres upheld the conventionally anthropocentric definition of the proletariat. "Thinking more critically about what [Karl] Marx saw as the revolutionary potential of the working class, it seems that using 'working class' to describe non-human laborers can obscure some key differences between humans and animals and the forms of exploitation each experiences," Torres said. "While Hribal argues that animals do indeed struggle against capital, their struggle is necessarily qualitatively different than the global proletarian revolution that Marx hoped for in his understanding of the working class. Animals cannot unite and break the chains that compel them to labor; their resistance to capital is necessarily more limited, if only by the singular and absolute power that humans wield over animals."

To me, the appeal to what Marx intended or meant rings rather hollow. If Marxism is a living ideology, and not a dead dogma, it must be open to the kind of bold reinterpretation which Hribal attempted but ultimately failed to deliver. Torres was correct however when he argued Hribal's definition of the proletariat obscures the difference in revolutionary potential between human and animal laborers. Perhaps Torres' placement of animals within Marxism came closest to the mark: "As neither exactly like human slaves or exactly like human wage laborers, animals occupy a different position within capitalism: they are superexploited living commodities."

Unfortunately, I don't have the in-depth knowledge of socialist theory necessary to contribute to this conversation in a meaningful way. I was recently introduced to an aphorism by the socialist "Big Bill" Haywood that — while I don't have the scar tissue implied, and have in fact blindly trudged through the first volume of Marx's magnum opus — sums up the common-sense, verging on anti-intellectual approach to socialism I find most appealing. "I've never read Marx's 'Capital,' but I have the marks of capital all over me," the Wobbly leader quipped, upholding the value of experiential education. However, in this case, to redefine animals in an anti-speciesist manner within socialist theory, I'm afraid an encyclopedic

knowledge of the ins-and-outs of Marxism will be required to be taken seriously by anthropocentric socialists.

Sue Coe: vegan-socialist illustrator  
By Jon Hochschartner

The contemporary British artist Sue Coe, whose work and public statements strongly condemn both capitalism and animal agriculture, is by all indications a vegan socialist. If an interview with the illustrator conducted in 2005 by Elin Slavick, now only available on an obscure blog, is to be trusted, Coe was reluctant to define her class politics, leaving that to others. However, I believe it's quite safe to say she is a socialist, in the broadest possible sense of the word, meaning one who supports public ownership of the economy, whether emerging from an anarchist, Marxist or social-democratic tradition.

A great deal of Coe's work, which is both horrifying and beautiful, focuses on the intersection of class and species politics. The cover image for her 2012 book, "Cruel: Bearing Witness to Animal Exploitation," is a case in point. It features an emaciated animal, whose recently slit throat bleeds into a bag of money held by the stereotypical vision of a capitalist wearing a top hat. Beside him are equally large piles of money and what appear to be both animal and human skulls together. In a similar illustration by Coe, entitled "Butcher to the World," a bloated businessman emerges from a mountain of animal corpses gripping sacks of cash which are dripping blood. In her piece "Animals Are the 99%," which shows a number of animals suffering human violence, Coe appropriates the slogan of the Occupy Wall Street movement to suggest humans have a similarly exploitive relationship to animals as the rich have to the poor and middle class.

According to a 1996 feature in Eye Magazine, early in her career in New York, Coe was drawn to the American Communist Party. This involvement informed her art. "Funky English punk art does not work in a tenant/landlord struggle," Coe said. "The art school mentality is not effective with people who don't have the luxury of trying out artistic styles, of breaking up a picture. What does work is a very realistic depiction of that struggle." In the same article, Coe described capitalism as an "economic crime."

In a 1993 article in the Baltimore Sun, during a conservative era when many believed there was no alternative to the free market, Coe offered an unapologetically stark choice. "There are only two economic systems known to human beings; one is socialism and one is capitalism," Coe said. "Capitalism will destroy itself — its contradictions will destroy it. Whether it will take all human beings off the face of the earth with it — that's the question." She went on to stress the importance of communal efforts, suggesting they were innate to human nature.

"How come we've survived this long?" Coe said. "Because we cooperate. If we didn't cooperate with each other, the human race would have been dead centuries ago. In fact, and this is a peculiar thing, we're too good. That's how come we're exploited by a tiny minority of corporations who do what they want. We allow it to happen. We cooperate. That's our nature — it's not warlike."

More recently, in a 2012 interview for Bomb magazine, Coe struck a similar note regarding what she saw as the inevitability of capitalist collapse. "We now have over ten percent of people unemployed, which according to any economist—even Milton Friedman—is revolutionary conditions," Coe said. "That's very unstable capitalism. Now capitalism, I don't think can be fixed...But in its death throes, it's extremely dangerous."

'Man, Controller of the Universe' is speciesist  
By Jon Hochschartner

Given the piece's title, it should come as little surprise that Diego Rivera's Marxist-inspired mural "Man, Controller of the Universe" is most likely speciesist. Among other things, but perhaps of primary concern for socialist animal liberationists, the 1934 composition features Charles Darwin resting his hand atop a lengthy measuring stick. At his feet sit a number of animals, including a monkey barely able to reach halfway up the straightedge, even with the help of an object upon which the primate is perched. While the painting is open to interpretation, to me this section is a rather clear endorsement of the anthropocentric Great Chain of Being, unscientifically wrapped in evolutionary garb.

"The Scala Naturae [also known as the Great Chain of Being] is a philosophical view of nature attributed to Aristotle in Ancient Greece," Lori Marino explained recently on the Huffington Post. "According to this view, nature is arranged on a kind of ladder or hierarchy of increasing 'advancement' and value, moving up from inorganic objects like stones, at the very bottom, to plants, through the 'lower' animals such as sponges, to vertebrates such as fish, then to 'higher' animals such as mammals, then to monkeys and apes, and finally humans." As Marino demonstrated, this view is simply false.

The story behind the creation of 'Man, Controller of the Universe' is interesting. Nelson Rockefeller, the capitalist and future vice-president of the United States, commissioned Rivera to paint a mural on the ground floor of the Rockefeller Center in New York City, titled 'Man at the Crossroads.' The Mexican artist, who was married to Frida Kahlo, did this, but included a sympathetic portrait of Vladimir Lenin surrounded by a multi-racial group of workers. Rockefeller demanded the image of the Russian Marxist be excised. Rivera refused, and much to the art world's dismay, the composition was subsequently destroyed. 'Man,

'Controller of the Universe,' which is often mistakenly referred to as 'Man at the Crossroads,' is Rivera's recreation of the latter based on photographs of his original work.

Rivera's apparent suggestion that humanity is the pinnacle of evolution represents a misreading of Charles Darwin's work and just the kind religious-inspired superstition the painting glorified triumph over. "Darwin's discoveries showed conclusively that there is no ladder, but that all life is instead connected through branching evolutionary relationships - known as phylogeny," Marino said. "Even though he demonstrated that there is no 'up' and 'down,' Darwin's insights were relabeled as the 'phylogenetic scale,' which continued to preserve a hierarchical system in which 'higher' organisms were more 'evolutionarily advanced' than 'lower' ones."

Given the format of Rivera's painting, one could argue, with incredible implausibility, that 'Man, Controller of the Universe' is a criticism of a reconstructed conception of the Great Chain of Being, rather than an endorsement of it. After all, Rivera's vision of regressive capitalism is pictured on the left side of the mural, while the artist's vision of progressive socialism is on the right. I'm not sure why Rivera placed Darwin in the context of the reactionary past. But that he meant the placement as criticism of anthropocentric science is laughably unlikely. More likely Darwin's location is a nod to the undeniable achievements of the capitalist era or how the naturalist's theories were used to justify cutthroat economic policies in the form of Social Darwinism.

As Marino pointed out, the Great Chain of Being, a version of which Rivera appeared to endorse, serves to ideologically justify human domination of other sentient species. "The Scala Naturae gives us license to exploit other animals because they are seen as being further down the ladder," Marino said. "It also helps us to view ourselves as not being fully part of nature, and therefore to disconnect from empathizing with other animals. It seems to give us a 'right' to treat them as commodities for our own use. Even seemingly well-intentioned ideas about stewardship and dominion are ultimately just manifestations of the same hierarchical view that leads to abuse and exploitation."

'Beasts of Burden' was influential vegan-socialist text  
By Jon Hochschartner

'Beasts of Burden' was an influential vegan-socialist pamphlet, first published in late 1999 by Antagonism Press. Its authorship remains a mystery, so far as I'm aware. The text was written using the pronoun, 'we,' but of course that does not necessarily mean the pamphlet was a collaborative project. Antagonism Press, which one must assume is no longer active, barely boasts a web presence at all.

For feedback, it requested mail be sent to a London address, in care of "BM Makhno," which one assumes is a pseudonym inspired by Russian anarchist Nestor Makhno.

The pamphlet was explicitly aimed at both socialists and animal advocates, in the hopes of beginning the process of unifying their respective struggles. "This is a text which, we hope, faces in two directions," the pamphlet stated. "On the one hand we hope that it will be read by people interested in animal liberation who want to consider why animal exploitation exists, as well as how. On the other hand, by those who define themselves as anarchists or communists who either dismiss animal liberation altogether or personally sympathise with it but don't see how it relates to their broader political stance."

The pamphlet argued there was a close connection between human and animal liberation. "The development and maintenance of capitalism as a system that exploits humans is in some ways dependent upon the abuse of animals," the text stated. "Furthermore the movement that abolishes capitalism by changing the relations between humans - communism - also involves a fundamental transformation of the relations between humans and animals."

The pamphlet traced the changing historical relationship between humans and animals, and how that relationship effected each, while attempting to avoid reductionism. "We should avoid ascribing to agriculture the role of 'original sin', the singular cause of humanity's misfortunes and of our expulsion from some primitive communist Eden," the text stated. "The development of states and classes were contradictory, complex and contested processes taking place over many millennia. While the domestication of plants and animals was an important part of this story, we do not want to suggest that it was the whole story."

The pamphlet made the case that animal-exploitation industries were critical to the development of capitalism. "The historical evidence suggests that not only is capitalism dependent on ruthless primitive accumulation, but primitive accumulation relies upon the animal industry," the text stated. "Marx is clear that it was 'the rise in the price of the wool,' which made it profitable to transform 'arable land into sheep walks.' People were driven from their homes to make way for sheep."

The pamphlet argued that in practical terms there could be no such thing as vegan capitalism. "Of course it is possible to imagine a theoretical model of capitalism that does not depend on animals, but this is to confuse an abstraction with the actually existing capitalism that has emerged as a result of real historical processes," the text said. "Similarly we could imagine a capitalism without racism or women's oppression, yet both of these have played a crucial role in maintaining

capital's domination and continue to exist despite superficial changes to the contrary."

The pamphlet argued that anti-speciesist thought enriched socialist theory. "Animal liberation perspectives enable us to see that if the reconciliation of humans and nature is to be more than an empty wish, concrete measures have to be taken to change the way humans relate to animals, such as dismantling the technology of factory farming," the text stated. "They also raise the question of extending the notion of community beyond humans to embrace other species - the fact that animals may not be able to participate in the community as active subjects does not mean they have to be simply objects for human use."

For the author or authors of the pamphlet, prefigurative veganism was important. "Total abstention is more or less impossible, and to moralistically condemn others for not going far enough only limits the scope for a movement to develop," the text stated. "Nevertheless, vegetarianism/veganism is not just a matter of sanctimonious handwashing...Not eating animals brings about qualitative improvement in the well-being of animals (as well as quantitative reduction in animals killed), even if as an isolated act it can be commodified and turned into another lifestyle marketing niche."

And yet, the pamphlet conceded that while the advent of socialism would mean positive change for animals, it would not necessarily mean the overall abolition of their use. "Disagreements would continue even in the society that would emerge as the communist movement developed to a stage where capitalism was in the process of being abolished across large parts of the world," the text stated. "Communism is not the application of a universal moral code, or the creation of a uniform society, and there would be no state or similar mechanism to impose, say, veganism, even if many people thought it desirable. The question of how to live with animals might be resolved in different ways in different times and places. The animal liberation movement would form one pole of the debate."

Was Shifu's vegetarianism motivated by anti-speciesism?

By Jon Hochschartner

The Chinese anarcho-communist Liu Shifu, who apparently modeled his class politics after Peter Kropotkin, was a steadfast practitioner of prefigurative vegetarianism, and encouraged his followers to be the same. And while there is some indication this abstinence from animal flesh was inspired by concern for non-human welfare, the other strictures Shifu applied to his adherents suggest the diet might also have just been a quasi-spiritual regimen of self-improvement.

In his anarchist publication, *The Voice of the People*, Shifu wrote, "Our principles



are communism, anti-militarism, syndicalism, anti-religion, anti-family, vegetarianism, an international language, and universal harmony. We also support all the new scientific discoveries which advance man's livelihood." Shifu took his prefigurative vegetarianism incredibly seriously. As Shifu was dying from tuberculosis in 1915, his doctor implored him to eat animal flesh for the sake of his health, according to Edward S. Krebs, but Shifu refused.

"Following (Leo) Tolstoy, Shifu presented vegetarianism as essential to non-violence and good health," Krebs said of the Chinese anarchist who began his revolutionary career as a member of the China Assassination Corps. "Shifu's [eventual] rejection of assassination and other forms of violence as tactics for revolution marks a similarity with Kropotkin's career. Shifu's linkage of vegetarianism with nonviolent social revolution might reflect the more immediate influence of Tolstoy."

And yet in context with other strictures Shifu pressed upon his followers, prefigurative vegetarianism looks like it could have been merely one point in a loyalty pledge to a group more concerned with apolitical self-improvement than effecting systemic change. These points included, according to Krebs: "(1) Do not eat meat. (2) Do not drink liquor. (3) Do not smoke tobacco. (4) Do not use servants. (5) Do not ride in sedan-chairs or rickshas. (6) Do not marry. (7) Do not use a family name. (8) Do not serve as an official. (9) Do not serve as a member of a representative body. (10) Do not join a political party. (11) Do not serve in the army or navy. (12) Do not believe in religion."

While one could imagine how many of these points fit into an anarchist worldview, the strictures against alcohol and tobacco seem completely motivated by an apolitical impulse for self-improvement. It is unclear to what degree Shifu's advocacy for prefigurative vegetarianism was motivated by a similar impulse, as opposed to anti-speciesism.

His individualistic desire to represent his beliefs prefiguratively extended to his class politics. In 1913, Shifu and his followers expended quite a bit of energy attempting to launch an anarchist colony, which ultimately didn't get off the ground. Such escapist endeavors are regarded by many socialists, including me, as self-indulgent distractions from genuine class struggle. As contemporary Marxist Paul D'Amato put it, "You can't build little islands of socialism in a sea of market capitalism," and even if one could, they in no way challenge systemic problems. I would argue efforts to create islands of prefigurative vegetarianism or veganism in a sea of societal speciesism are a similar waste of time, if not doomed to fail.

Still, Shifu's influence, and that of anarchism more broadly, was wide enough in China in the early part of the 20th century that even a young Mao Zedong, who

would later engineer his own brand of Stalinism, recognized Shifu by name, according to Krebs.

## Animal activists need their own Bechdel test

By Jon Hochschartner

Animal activists need their own rubric to assess anthropocentrism in fictional work that's similar to the Bechdel test employed by feminists to gauge gender bias.

Named for its popularizer, the Bechdel test has three requirements an artistic piece must meet in order to pass. First, it has to include at least two women. Second, they have to speak to each other. Third, they have to speak to each other about something other than a man. Despite its limitations, this simple test has proven effective at highlighting sexism in films and other works of fiction.

Animal activists would benefit from something similar. I'd like to put forward what might be the basis for such a test. The standard would be simple. To pass, any work with unnecessary violence by humans against animals would have to include some kind of editorial signal that the practice is wrong. Now what exactly does that mean? Because I write about video games, I will use examples from that medium, but the test could easily apply to others.

To begin, the categories of humans and other animals would not be limited to their existing forms. For instance, the creatures of the "Pokémon" series, who are captured in the wild and trained to fight, are clearly analogous to animals. Similarly, despite looking feline, the Khajiit of "The Elder Scrolls" series, who ride horses and practice religion, have far more in common with humans than other real-life species.

Let's clarify some more terms. What's unnecessary violence against animals? An example can be found in "The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time," in which Link can catch fish with a rod. The fish pose no immediate, unavoidable threat to Link, and there's no indication he's incapable of surviving on plant-based foods. This is unnecessary violence against animals. In contrast, in 2013's "Tomb Raider," Lara Croft need not seek out wolves for them to pursue her and cause her lethal damage if she doesn't kill them first. Though wolves don't actually behave this way in life, within the game this violence against animals is much more necessary.

But artists often want their work to reflect the reality of today or the past. And those realities unfortunately include a lot of unnecessary violence by humans against animals. The test would make room for the depiction of these, so long as the work includes editorial signals the practice is wrong.

Some readers may rankle at the idea that games should take a position, however subtly, on anything, let alone unnecessary violence against animals. But like it or not, games transmit value systems. Even games that are infamous for their supposed nihilism, like the "Grand Theft Auto" series, do. While the criminal franchise revels vicariously in the wrongness of its protagonists actions against other humans, it's generally clear their actions are wrong. In contrast, unnecessary violence against animals in video games typically isn't portrayed as problematic. Unlike, say, shooting pedestrians in "Grand Theft Auto," unnecessary violence against animals in video games generally isn't a knowing transgression of moral boundaries. This needs to change.

Editorial signals that unnecessary violence against animals is wrong can be communicated in a number of different ways. Some games, such as the "Fallout" series, include a morality meter, which, based on a player's in-game actions, will assign players an ethical status that will effect how their character is treated. More often though, value systems are transmitted through plot, dialogue, character development and other methods. Most obviously, one knows the villain's actions are wrong because of his or her role in the story. Editorial signals, however subtle, that unnecessary violence against animals is wrong are limited in form only by artists' imaginations.

That would be the test in a nutshell. To pass, any work that features unnecessary violence against animals would have to include some kind of editorial signal the practice was wrong. Further, unnecessary violence against animals does not include defense against an immediate, unavoidable threat. Editorial signals can be conveyed in a variety of ways. But some additional factors must be added that have so far been left out for the sake of simplicity.

For the test's purposes, the definition of violence would need to be expanded to include confinement and involuntary labor. Otherwise, for instance, the "Zoo Tycoon" series, which centers on unnecessary confinement of animals, could potentially pass so long as, within the context of confinement, minimal welfare needs are met.

Some animal activists might believe the depictions of unnecessary violence against animals requiring negative editorial signals should include not just the actions themselves, but the human-desired results of these actions, such as meat, leather or eggs. Ideally, this would be the case. But my initial thought is that, given our society's current anthropocentrism, passing the test would be seen as unattainable and artists would not attempt to do so.

If adopted, hopefully this test would help identify the ubiquity of speciesism in fictional works in much the same way as the Bechdel test does for sexism.

Despard was anti-speciesist socialist

The British activist Charlotte Despard, in addition to being a communist, feminist and Irish nationalist, was an anti-speciesist of some degree, practicing prefigurative vegetarianism and campaigning against vivisection. Despard was on friendly terms with Eleanor Marx, the youngest daughter of Karl Marx, and was a delegate to the Second International meeting in 1896, prior to the organization's dissolution during the First World War. Following stints in other socialist groups, she would eventually join the British Communist Party, for which her house was attacked by a right-wing mob.

Despard was, according to Rod Preece, president of the London Vegetarian Society and the National Canine Defence League. She was present at the 1906 unveiling of a controversial anti-vivisectionist statue, according to Coral Lansbury, which sparked riots when trade unionists and feminists defended the monument from attack by medical students. The statue featured a bronze dog atop a fountain, which was inscribed with the following words.

"In Memory of the Brown Terrier Dog done to Death in the Laboratories of University College in February 1903, after having endured Vivisection extending over more than two months and having been handed from one Vivisector to another till Death came to his Release," the inscription stated. "Also in Memory of the 232 dogs vivisected at the same place during the year 1902. Men and Women of England, how long shall these things be?"

In 1910, conservatives gained control of the local government and sought to have the statue removed. Despite protests by Despard and other anti-vivisectionists, the monument was dismantled in the middle of the night by government workers guarded by an astonishing 120 police officers, according to Lansbury.

Despard connected her feminism to her animal advocacy. "The Women's Movement is related also with the other great movements of the world," she said. "The awakened instinct which feels the call of the subhuman which says — 'I am the voice of the voiceless. Through me the dumb shall speak,' is a modern phenomenon that cannot be denied. It works itself out as food reform on the one hand, and on the other, in strong protest against the cruel methods of experimental research. Both these are in close unison with the demands being made by women."

As I've mentioned in other articles, Stalinist Russia was hostile to vegetarianism. In 1930, Despard toured the Soviet Union in what one must assume was a trip carefully choreographed and managed by her hosts. According to Adam Hochschild, "She found everything to be splendid: the diet was good, children

privileged, education enlightened, orphanages first-rate, and the courts wise and generous." Despite her support for Stalinism and the British Communist Party, which was under the sway of the Soviet Union, one can't necessarily assume Despard had given up her commitment to prefigurative vegetarianism in later life. According to James D. Hunt, she was Vice-President of the London Vegetarian Society in 1931.

Despard died in 1939 at the age of 95. According to the Communist Party of Ireland website, she had been declared bankrupt two years prior, "her finances exhausted from her philanthropic and political activities."

I'm scared of networking with pro-animal socialists  
By Jon Hochschartner

I'm vaguely fearful of connecting with the anti-speciesist left on social media like Facebook, as I am of connecting with other explicitly political contacts with different ideological focus. Because like all such subcultures there will no doubt be a high degree of personal point scoring, through call-outs that carry the implicit threat of excommunication, motivated less by sincere consciousness-raising than intragroup rivalries. And that's a problem.

As a writer who goes by the pseudonym Saturnite points out on his socialist blog, Spread the Infestation, relationships are essential to the development of progressive movements. "A study by Doug McAdam of the University of Arizona focused on the Freedom Riders of the Civil Rights Movement," Saturnite said. "McAdam looked for different reasons why 75 percent of the participants stuck with it and 25 percent of them dropped out. The most important factors turned out to not be their level of political sophistication or their emotional commitment. The critical telling factor was, when participants were asked to write a list of all the people they personally knew in the movement, the dropouts had the shortest lists, and the holdouts had the longest. People stayed because they had a larger amount of real relationships with other people."

Obviously real-life relationships, as opposed to online ones, are preferable in the creation of sustainable movements. But in the absence of local networks of pro-animal socialists I will focus this article on community-building efforts on social media. Personally, I'm wary of connecting with activists on websites like Facebook, given the stream of consciousness nature of such outlets, because I fear I will be judged for inadvertently saying something reactionary or revealing similar backwardness or unexamined privilege in my past. If I worry about this, I suspect many others do to.

This is a problem. Movements cannot grow beyond cultish sects in environments

where participants feel at constant risk of public shaming or expulsion by their comrades for saying or doing the wrong thing. Such environments stifle ideological or tactical innovation, which often require risk-taking. Perhaps worse, they discourage potential participants from involvement and disaffect current members. Who would want to exist in such toxic atmospheres, let alone long term, in which activists feel under siege by their nominal comrades?

Of course, this is not to say that within leftist movements we should stop trying to raise consciousness. All of our perspectives are reductionist to one degree or another, based on our life experience and emergence from various progressive traditions that view the world primarily through a singular lens — whether that lens be class, gender, race, sexuality, species or another category. Our liberatory theory will only be strengthened by incorporating other perspectives.

But we must raise consciousness without judging individuals, all of whose beliefs and behavior are the result of systemic forces. If we support excommunication for certain offenses we must consider what such a standard would mean for the potential growth of our movements if applied to the general public, who, it should go without saying, we are trying to win over. However impatient we are for change, and reactionary as they might be, we cannot bypass the human masses, as they are the primary agents of progress.

Using a metaphor of dental hygiene, radio personality Jay Smooth provided an insightful example of how to raise consciousness about race without turning the conversation into a judgement on individuals. The lesson should be applied to similar discussions about class, gender, sexuality, species and other categories.

"There's a tendency to assume that any conversation about race is a referendum on whether I am a bad person," Smooth said, according to a National Public Radio station website. "We usually think of race issues [as] if I'm not racist than that's a permanent state that I don't need to mind and do constant upkeep on...All of us as good people need to get more comfortable with telling each other that we've got something stuck in our teeth as it were, when it comes to these race issues."

Carpenter was Fabian animal advocate  
By Jon Hochschartner

Edward Carpenter was a socialist and early gay-rights activist, who practiced prefigurative vegetarianism and advocated on behalf of animals. It should be said that Carpenter's brand of socialism, Fabianism, was despised by many revolutionaries of his era, such as Leon Trotsky, who regarded it as overly reformist.

"The reformists who are fighting against a proletarian class consciousness are, in the final reckoning, a tool of the ruling class," Trotsky said in 1925. "The day that the British proletariat cleanses itself of the spiritual abomination of Fabianism, mankind, especially in Europe, will increase its stature by a head." Whether Carpenter's gradual approach was, in the final analysis, worse for the working class than Trotsky's Bolshevism, which I would argue inadvertently laid the groundwork for Stalinism, I'm unsure.

Writing in 1889, Carpenter admirably condemned capitalism and vivisection in the same breath. In doing so, however, he seemed to take a problematically condescending view toward non-European people, and made presumptions about ancient Egyptian attitudes toward animal welfare for which I'm unsure there is any basis. "On the whole we pride ourselves (and justly I believe) on the general advance in humanity," Carpenter said. "Yet we know that to-day the merest savages can only shudder at a civilisation whose public opinion allows—as among us—the rich to wallow in their wealth, while the poor are systematically starving; and it is certain that the vivisection of animals—which on the whole is approved by our educated classes (though not by the healthier sentiment of the uneducated)—would have been stigmatised as one of the most abominable crimes by the ancient Egyptians—if, that is, they could have conceived such a practice possible at all."

It should be noted that Carpenter was not particularly strict in his prefigurative vegetarianism. Writing in 1899, he confessed, "I have yet never made any absolute rule against flesh-eating, and have as a matter of fact eaten a very little every now and then - just, as it were, to see how it tasted, or to avoid giving trouble in Philistine households, and so forth."

In his 1920 criticism of the Catholic Church, Carpenter again returned to the issues of capitalism and animal testing. "The Church," he said, "which has hardly ever spoken a generous word in favor or defence of the animals; which in modern times has supported vivisection as against the latter; Capitalism and Commercialism as against the poorer classes of mankind...such a Church can hardly claim to have established the angelic character of its mission among mankind!"

In an essay published the next year, titled 'A New Morality,' Carpenter outlined his own inclusive worldview. "Make this the basis of all teaching," Carpenter said. "Let them learn as they grow up, to regard all human beings, of whatever race or class, as ends in themselves—never to be looked upon as mere things or chattels to be made use of. Let them also learn to look upon the animals in the same light—as beings, they too, who are climbing the great ladder of creation—beings with whom also we humans have a common spirit and interest."

How did Wright feel about animal testing?

By Jon Hochschartner

It's difficult to assess the species politics of Richard Wright solely based on his account of direct participation in vivisection. Near the beginning of the Great Depression, the Black writer and communist assisted in animal experimentation after being assigned by a relief agency to work in a Chicago hospital.

Wright was a member of the United States Communist Party for approximately a decade, beginning in the early 1930s, according to Annie Zirin. Among other forms of activism, in 1936 he took a job as Harlem editor of the *Daily Worker*, a CP publication. Wright would publicly break with the party, Megan Behrent said, "as [Joseph] Stalin's horrors became known, and as the CP, under orders from Stalinist Russia, abandoned the fight against racism in the U.S., a struggle that had won the party the support and political allegiance of the likes of Wright."

In his acclaimed autobiography, Wright described the hospital at which he was working as one of the biggest and wealthiest in Chicago. "I cleaned operating rooms, dog, rat, mice, cat and rabbit pens, and fed guinea pigs," he said. As a boy, Wright dreamed of being a medical researcher, and perhaps satiating this childhood interest, he asked questions of the vivisectors regarding the tests. His queries do not appear critical.

"I wanted to know if the dogs being treated for diabetes were getting well; if the rats and mice in whom cancer had been induced showed any signs of responding to treatment," Wright said, with seeming enthusiasm. "I wanted to know the principle that lay behind the Aschheim-Zondek tests that were made with rabbits, the Wassermann tests that were made with guinea pigs." The doctors he asked dismissed his questions in a racist manner.

Wright described his involvement in testing with cold detachment, perhaps the inevitable result of consistent exposure to such violence. "Each Saturday morning I assisted a young Jewish doctor in slitting the vocal cords of a fresh batch of dogs from the city pound," he said. "The object was to devocalize the dogs so that their howls would not disturb the patients in the other parts of the hospital. I held each dog as the doctor injected nembutal into its veins to make it unconscious; then I held the dog's jaws open as the doctor inserted the scalpel and severed the vocal cords."

And yet this appeared to have a deep effect on Wright. "Later, when the dogs came to, they would lift their heads to the ceiling and gape in a soundless wail," he



said. "The sight became lodged in my imagination as a symbol of silent suffering." Indeed, Wright used the animals' plight as a metaphor for that of his black coworkers. Speaking of the latter, he said, "Perhaps there was in them a vague psyche pain stemming from their chronically frustrating way of life, a pain whose cause they did not know; and, like those devocalized dogs, they would whirl and snap at the air when their old pain struck them." And yet was this just a literary device? Not much later he distances his coworkers and himself from animals. "He did not regard me as a human being," Wright said of a white authority figure. "The hospital kept us four Negroes...as though we were close kin to the animals we tended." Given the frequency with which speciesism was and is used to justify vicious racism, it's more than understandable Wright felt the need to create such distance.

Later, Wright recounts a physical altercation between two of his coworkers that created chaos in the laboratory. "The steel tiers lay jumbled; the doors of the cage swung open," he said. "Rats and mice and dogs and rabbits moved over the floor in wild panic. The Wassermann guinea pigs were squealing as though judgement day had come. Here and there an animal had been crushed beneath a cage." Hoping to avoid discovery, Wright and his coworkers haphazardly threw animals into enclosures and frantically hid others' dead bodies. The anecdote is written in what seems to be a slightly comedic tone that unfortunately minimizes non-human lives and suffering. But it seems clear in this case Wright was not motivated by conscious animus toward animals. Rather, using grim humor, he sought to highlight his desperate panic, and that of his coworkers, which resulted from Black vulnerability within capitalist white supremacy.

Ultimately, more information is needed besides Wright's account of his involvement in animal testing to get an accurate sense of his species politics.

Nibert discusses intersection of species and class  
By Jon Hochschartner

David Nibert, an anti-speciesist socialist, is a professor at Wittenburg University and the author of two respected books on the intersection of human and animal exploitation and oppression. Nibert was an organizer for the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC)— a precursor to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) – when he was a university student in the late 1970s. He is currently a member of the DSA.

"It is essential for animal rights activists to recognize how capitalism promotes oppression economically, politically and ideologically," Nibert said in a recent email interview. "And it is equally imperative that socialists become aware that the abolition of the oppression of other animals is crucial in creating a sustainable, just

and nonviolent system of food production, which is an important step in promoting economic and social justice for all."

For Nibert, it's important one understands how the plight of animals and that of low-status humans have been interconnected through history. "For example, the expropriation of land and water resources to raise animals for food has been responsible for centuries of violence, displacement and repression throughout the world," Nibert said. "Hundreds of millions of indigenous peoples are landless and marginalized due to past land grabs by ranchers."

This practice continues into the present. "Tens of millions of hectares of land are being taken in Latin America and Africa to enable corporate agribusiness and the retail food industry to double the profitable consumption of animal products by the more affluent – again, with an increasing emphasis on 'grass-fed, organic' fare, which requires even more resources," Nibert said.

He is opposed to reformist approaches to eventual animal liberation. "When some corporations agree to increase cage sizes, this is taken as a victory for other animals, and the businesses that oppress animals for profit are given awards and endorsements," he said. "Some advocates for other animals pursue voter initiatives to ameliorate the worst forms of oppression of other animals. However, changing economic and political circumstances can quickly lead to the nullification of such modest reforms. Indeed, Iowa congressional representative Steve King tried to attach an amendment to the 2014 federal farm bill that would have nullified such reforms in many states. Although he was unsuccessful this year, his efforts illuminate how tenuous such meek reforms actually are."

In order to demonstrate the supposed uselessness of reform, Nibert highlighted conservative rollbacks of progressive victories of generations past in anthropocentric politics. "In the past several decades we have seen many legislated reforms ostensibly to ameliorate human suffering and deprivation quashed — from the New Deal-era policies of establishing a progressive income tax and rights for organized labor to the recent attack on voting rights for people of color," he said. "Statutory reforms relating to the treatment of other animals are unlikely to fare any better. In the end, the gradualist, reform-based approach to social justice largely serves ideological and diversionary functions for an expanding capitalist system."

For Nibert, reforms aren't just useless, they're actually detrimental to progressive struggle. "What is more, such tepid, 'humane' reforms actually make the public feel comfortable eating products derived from the oppression of other animals and are thus counter-productive," he said. "To really promote justice for other animals, their human advocates should promote a global transition to a plant-based diet and

stop wasting energy on creating reforms and the quixotic efforts to see that they are enforced."

It should be mentioned the organization to which Nibert belongs, the DSA, supports tactical reformism. As the group's website states, "Reforms we win now—raising the minimum wage, securing a national health plan, and demanding passage of right-to-strike legislation—can bring us closer to socialism." One wonders if Nibert genuinely cannot see the value of such measures. Karl Marx reportedly made his famous quip, "All I know is that I am not a Marxist," in response to the devaluation of reform by his French acolytes. He dismissed their arguments as "revolutionary phrase-mongering."

Using language apparently inspired by the work of Gary Francione, Nibert upheld the prioritization of individual consumer choices. "Being vegan and promoting the abolition of all forms of oppression of other animals should be the baseline for all animal activists," Nibert said. Pressed as to whether he applied such a prefigurative standard to environmentalists and socialists, he suggested he did not do so. "Eating other animals is not the moral equivalent of getting into an automobile," Nibert said. "Indeed, it is difficult to function in the United States by staying out of automobiles. However, use of – and support for – hybrid and electric vehicles, and using public transportation when possible, is responsible behavior. People opposed to sweatshops may indeed prefer to refrain from buying products from Nike and similar brands and shop for fair trade and union-made shoes and clothing."

Nibert seemed to suggest that veganism was necessary to feed the global human population. "While more than a billion people on the earth are currently hungry and malnourished, over 70 percent of the earth's agricultural land is used for the creation of animal products," he said. "As the human population races to more than ten billion, and as climate change advances, a transition to a plant-based diet is essential in order to feed an increasingly hungry and thirsty world." Questioned whether he thought dire poverty was a result of scarcity, rather than an unequal distribution of wealth as socialists traditionally argue, Nibert appeared to backtrack. "The fact that so much of the world's agricultural land is in the hands of the Animal Industrial Complex leads to food scarcity," he said.

Asked to weigh in on the debate between Jason Hribal, who sees animals as part of the proletariat, and Bob Torres, who views domesticated non-humans as superexploited living commodities, Nibert was noncommittal. "I can see some truth in both positions," he said. "Other animals have been exploited as laborers for centuries, while also being treated objectified and treated as property."

Lucy Robins Lang and the St. Helena Vegetarian Cafe

By Jon Hochschartner

Shortly after the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, the anarchist Lucy Robins Lang and her husband began the process of opening a vegetarian restaurant that would become a hub for socialists of different stripes in the city by the bay. In another example of the pitfalls of the anti-speciesist left establishing a political identity based around lifestyle choices, there is no evidence I'm aware of that the couple's vegetarianism had anything to do with non-human solidarity.

After arriving in San Francisco, the pair became friends with a vegetarian who introduced them to other practitioners in the Bay Area. Among these "was Darling the Nature Man, who refused to not only eat flesh but also to wear garments made out of animal matter," Lang said. "Winter and summer he lived in the hills on the outskirts of San Francisco, wearing only a strip of linen around his loins." One wonders if this is exaggeration on Lang's part, prefigurative politics taken to extremes, mental illness, or some combination of these.

Another local vegetarian who they met was the famed novelist and socialist Jack London. "London not only converted us to vegetarianism but persuaded us to establish a vegetarian restaurant," Lang said. According to her, the writer encouraged them, arguing, "You'll do all right...People are always taking up new ideas, and the only vegetarian restaurant in town was burned down." But London's vegetarianism, whatever motivated it, was short lived. By the time the couple opened their restaurant, the novelist "had abandoned vegetarianism and was living on raw meat," Lang said.

Lang and her husband named their restaurant the St. Helena Vegetarian Cafe after the St. Helena Sanitarium where Lang had received lessons in vegetarian cooking. "We rented part of a big shack on Market Street, papered the inside with a warm, red-flower pattern, and hung up racks of newspapers and magazines in imitation of the European cafés," Lang said. "While gangs of fishermen, dock workers, longshoremen, stokers, and sailors thronged the bars and brothels of the waterfront, we of the radical tribe sat over our chaste dishes on crisp linen, discussing the revolutionary parties of all the European nations."

It should be mentioned that, at least in retrospect, Lang was very much aware of her group's disconnect from the working class, jokingly referring to the restaurant as an "ivory tower." Still it was a hub for Bay Area socialists. "Our restaurant was one of two centers for the radicals of San Francisco," Lang said. "The other was the Liberty Book Store, which was operated by Alexander Horr and William McDevitt, the former an anarchist single taxer, the latter a Marxian Social Democrat. The Liberty Book Store carried only the literature of social protest, and the proprietors would argue hotly with any customer who was indiscreet enough as

to ask for a novel."

According to Richard Steven Street, "Many of the first California Wobblies could be found frequenting such hangouts as the big shack on Market Street known as the St. Helena Vegetarian Cafe, haunted by IWW member Edward Morgan, 'a dreary apostle of pure reason,' who liked to harangue people as they arrived for lunch." The cafe burnt down on November 17, 1909, not long after it was built. According to the San Francisco Call, the fire resulted from "defective wiring on the rear of the building."

Lang's vegetarianism did not last either. In her memoir, she recounts eating flesh "heartily" later in life. One must assume some prototypical socialist animal liberationists walked through the doors of the St. Helena Vegetarian Cafe, but unfortunately their passing does not seem to have been recorded, so far as I can tell.

Animal defenders should unite  
By Jon Hochschartner

In an interview at the 2013 Subversive Festival in Croatia, Marxist writer Richard Seymour alluded to what he described as a 1960s slogan, regarding the realities of movement building, which would be helpful for animal advocates. The saying appears to have originated from Civil Rights activist Bernice Johnson Reagon, who argued, "If you're in a coalition and you're comfortable, you know it's not a broad enough coalition." I'm unsure of the context in which Reagon spoke, but within the animal-defense movement, I'd argue we must put aside our ideological and strategic differences as much as possible to achieve genuine change for non-humans.

To me, the benefit of prioritizing unity was the greatest lesson of the Occupy Wall Street movement. What gave that all-too-brief struggle in 2011 its power? It wasn't the movement's analysis of capitalism, which was largely reformist. While one could find anarchists, Marxists and social democrats at the encampments, in my experience they were overwhelmingly outnumbered by disaffected liberals. One could even find deeply-confused Ron Paul supporters! Its phraseology, contrasting the "one percent" and "the 99 percent," suggested reform. After all, while the capitalist class is a small minority, one must assume those who own the means of production make up more than one percent of the population. No doubt there are a dozen socialist sects in the country that have a more progressive analysis of the economy. But in political terms, these groups are completely irrelevant. What gave the Occupy movement its power was the large number of people involved. And that's it.

To create change, non-human defenders must create a similarly broad coalition. And for many of us, that's going to be uncomfortable. Simply within the revolutionary pole of the animal movement, it means pacifists should work with militants. Tactical reformers should work with abolitionists inspired by the work of Gary Francione. And those who prioritize prefigurative veganism should work with those who do not. Outside of this revolutionary pole, which one must assume would represent a minority position within a broader coalition, revolutionaries should work with reformists. We have so much unexplored ideological common ground with those who are critical of animal exploitation but might not yet want to get rid of it altogether. In fact, if the Occupy movement is any indication, proximity between revolutionaries and reformists can give revolutionaries a greater sense of the importance of short-term goals and be a radicalizing experience for reformists.

Of course this is not to say that within such a coalition we shouldn't debate those whose species politics are to the right of ours. On the contrary, we should constantly be attempting to pull our reformist allies toward a more progressive position on animal exploitation. But our criticism should be comradely, so much as possible. Within reason, we should be a loyal opposition, because we recognize that small sects, however correct their positions may be, are ineffectual. Our guiding strategy should be to make our coalition as numerically large as possible while retaining its progressive character.

West advocated animal-exploitation reform  
By Jon Hochschartner

Cornel West, the public intellectual and honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, has advocated incredibly mild reform of animal exploitation in the past, which one hopes he sees as a short-term demand rather than an end goal. He is perhaps best known for his 1994 book 'Race Matters.'

In late 2003, West wrote to the parent company of the KFC, the fast-food giant, regarding animal abuse. "I am disappointed to learn from my friends at People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) that KFC has refused to take steps to eliminate some of the most egregious cruelty to chickens in the industry," West said. "PETA informs me that members of KFC's own animal-welfare advisory panel have approved a list of simple guidelines for animal welfare that would eliminate some of the worst abuses that these animals suffer, yet KFC higher-ups have refused to implement them."

In his letter, West seemed to have all of the information needed to draw revolutionary conclusions regarded animal exploitation. "Although most people don't know chickens as well as they know cats and dogs, chickens are interesting

individuals with personalities and interests every bit as developed as the dogs and cats with whom many of us share our lives," he said. "And of course, they feel pain just like we do."

It's unclear if the demand he made of the corporation was intended as a stepping stone to greater change or an ultimate goal. One hopes it's the former. "As a person who is concerned about all injustices," West said, "I am asking you to direct KFC's suppliers to stop breeding and drugging animals so that they collapse under their own weight or die from heart failure and to phase in humane gas killing, a method of slaughter that protects birds from broken bones and wings, electric shocks, and even drowning in scalding-hot tanks of water."

Perhaps shining further light on West's species politics, West responded to a question regarding the validity of human uniqueness in an undated video posted to the Dropping Knowledge website.

"I think there is, for me, no doubt that the life of a human being does have more value than a life of an amoeba. I believe that the life of my mother has much, much, much more value than the life of a fly," West said. "That does not mean that we are justified in crushing other sentient creatures. It does not mean that we are justified in systematically exploiting the mammals and animals...The question is how to become ecumenical, to support as many life forms as possible without losing sight of the dignity of human beings."

West's apparent belief in some sort of religious-inspired notion of dignity exclusive to humans, while problematic, is not necessarily antithetical to the animal-liberation project. One could conceivably assert such human uniqueness while also recognizing that animal exploitation is harmful and unnecessary.

Continuing, however, West seemed to suggest a false dichotomy between working on behalf of humans and working on behalf of animals, as if one couldn't do both or as if lifting humans from dire poverty required animal exploitation. The latter view, of course, would be based on a regressive perspective that poverty is caused by scarcity, which could be alleviated by the use of non-humans, rather than unequal distribution of wealth. "When there are so many fellow human beings, one billion living on \$1 a day, two billion living on \$2 a day, we cannot downplay their plight even as we support other life forms and attempt to protect other life forms, be they whales, be they penguins, be they dogs, or cats," West said. Strangely, none of the species he mentions are those humanity exploits on a comparatively broad scale, aside from companion animals, whose exploitation is generally gentler than that afforded, say, farmed animals.

There's nothing revolutionary about meat-eating

By Jon Hochschartner

In late 2000, professors Teresa L. Ebert and Ma'sud Zavarzadeh wrote an unbelievably silly commentary for the Los Angeles Times called "Our American Diet Divides Us Into Classes of Workers and Bosses," that one hopes was intended as satire. As absurd as the article is, I fear that it's condescending workerism, by which I mean a perspective that glorifies a crude caricature of blue-collar culture, is representative of the view held by most of the socialist left in regard to the consumption of animal flesh.

"The politics of the Atkins and Ornish diets has proved to be so divisive that Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, in an almost Hegelian scenario of the relation between the state and civil society, has suggested that government researchers should do an impartial study of the two, thereby putting an end to the civil strife," Ebert and Zavarzadeh said of the competing flesh and plant-based diets. "Like everything else in social life, diets are determined not by what people desire but by the conditions of their class. This is quite an un-American thing to say, but people eat class and not food; food preferences are shaped by what one can afford to choose."

Interestingly, the pair made reference, seemingly without awareness, to an obvious objection to their argument. "By class, we do not mean lifestyle, where one shops, what accent one has or what car one drives," Ebert and Zavarzadeh said. "These are signs of cultural prestige. They belong to social semiotics and not class. Class depends on people's position in the social relations of production: Do they buy other people's labor and make a profit from it? Or do they sell their own labor in order to live?"

As the duo correctly states, from a socialist perspective, class identity is not determined by one's accent or car. It's not even based on income. For Marxists, class is solely determined by one's relation to the means of production. That Ebert and Zavarzadeh, having said this, would go on to seemingly argue consuming dead animals is inherently proletarian appears like an obvious contradiction. But of course this is exactly what they do.

"The Atkins diet is a proletarian diet: meat, eggs and other high-protein sources along with usually forbidden fats, especially butter and cream," Ebert and Zavarzadeh said. "This is 'real food,' according to Atkins, not upper-class 'invented, fake food.' In his recent New Yorker piece 'On Impact,' about recovering from a serious injury, Stephen King highlights the class culture of meat, writing that he and his wife 'came from similar working-class backgrounds; we both ate meat.' Meat is the food of the working people; a food of necessity for the class that relies on the raw energy of its body for subsistence."



The pair contrasted the Atkins diet with the plant-based Ornish plan, which they look on unfavorably. One could accept some of their points regarding inconvenience if they were aimed solely at prefigurative plant-based diets, rather than vegetarianism or veganism in general. But their writing suggests no such distinction. "The low-fat, vegetarian Ornish diet, in contrast, is a diet for those with the time and leisure to play and experiment," Ebert and Zavarzadeh said. "It entails extensive lifestyle changes. Eating becomes a full-time leisure activity, requiring frequent 'grazing' because with the low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet, according to internist Dean Ornish, 'you get hungry sooner [and] feel full faster.' Eating becomes a gaze into one's soul: a meditation, a Zen moment in which a single bite becomes 'exquisitely satisfying.' It is an extended Proustian moment."

The duo concluded by reiterating their workerism regarding the essential connection between proletarianism and the consumption of corpses. "In spite of their innumerable surface variations, all diets repeat the two fundamental divisions of society into the classes of workers and owners," Ebert and Zavarzadeh said. "In eating food, we eat our class." Again, one hopes this piece was intended as satire. Sadly, I suspect that, while writing to some degree with tongue-in-cheek, they meant what they said.

#### Stalinist collectivization sparked massive animal slaughter By Jon Hochschartner

Rapid and violent collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era triggered the slaughter of domesticated animals on an incomprehensible scale from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s. While many of these non-humans would presumably have been killed regardless, their lives were undoubtedly cut shorter than they might have been.

"Peasants protested the injustice of a 'socialization' they viewed as plunder by selling or slaughtering their animals and other properties in an attempt to preserve something of their hard-earned work in the form of cash after sales, to store up a supply of food for the likely hungry times impending, or, if nothing else, to deny Soviet power the fruits of their labor," Lynne Viola said. "Peasant razbazarivanie [squandering] of livestock was of such massive and destructive scale as to directly shape state policy in the short term and cripple the potential of socialized agriculture in the long term."

According to figures provided by Viola, in 1929 there were 34 million horses in the Soviet Union. In 1933, there were a mere 16.6 million, which represents a more than 50-percent population drop. Similarly, in 1928 there were 70.5 million cattle and by 1933 there were only 34.5 million. Again, this is a more than 50-

percent fall. In 1928 there were 26 million pigs. By 1932, there were a mere 11.6 million, which is another drop of over 50 percent. Finally, in 1928 there were 146.7 million sheep and goats. In 1933, this number had shrank to 50.2 million, which means the population had been reduced by more than 65 percent.

Writing of this failed period of collectivization, the exiled Bolshevik Leon Trotsky observed, in a supreme understatement, "The most devastating hurricane hit the animal kingdom." But Trotsky did not fault collectivization in general for this outcome. "The blame for these sacrifices lies not upon collectivization, but upon the blind, violent, gambling methods with which it was carried through," he said. "Having in its hands both the power and the industries, the bureaucracy could have regulated the process without carrying the nation to the edge of disaster. They could have, and should have, adopted tempos better corresponding to the material and moral resources of the country."

Socialization efforts were not helped by the gossip which spread through the countryside. "There was much confusion among officials and peasants about what collectivization really meant and wild rumors held that it heralded the Antichrist, Apocalypse, a return to serfdom, a sharing of women, and foreign invasion," Mary E. A. Buckley said.

Viola quoted a few peasants who gave a sense of the mood among their class at the time. "It's all the same—soon everything we own will be socialized. It's better now to slaughter and sell the livestock than to let it remain," said one. Another peasant, whose motivation was more explicit, said, "We will not enter the collective because [we] know our property will be used by the poor. Better that we, in an organized way, destroy our horses, burn our property, than to give it to those sluggards."

Spira was socialist anti-speciesist  
By Jon Hochschartner

Many socialists and anti-speciesists might not be aware, but one of the most celebrated animal activists in recent memory was a veteran of the Trotskyist movement. According to Peter Singer, in twenty years, Henry Spira did "more to reduce animal suffering than anything done in the previous fifty years by vastly larger organizations with millions of dollars at their disposal."

Spira's involvement in socialist politics apparently began in his adolescence. "Henry went with his friends to classes on socialism organized by Trotskyists," Singer said. "He began reading [Leon] Trotsky and V.I. Lenin, as well as the early Russian Marxist, G.V. Plekhanov." His views began to change, and among other

things, he stopped observing Jewish religious law. "He began to see injustice not as a matter of the greed or sadism of particular individuals, but as something more systemic," Singer said. "He became a socialist, sharing Trotsky's view that Stalin had derailed the idea of a real socialist revolution."

Spira soon became a supporter of the United States' Socialist Workers Party, for which he would be blacklisted and subjected to government surveillance in the 1950s. Spira covered labor struggles and the Civil Rights Movement for the SWP's newspaper 'The Militant.' He wrote for other socialist publications about the Cuban revolution, which he witnessed firsthand. Later, he would take part in reform efforts within the National Maritime Union.

Spira would eventually leave the SWP, it seems, primarily because he saw the organization as out of touch with the working class. His exit appears to have been motivated by a disillusionment with the group's cultishness rather than socialism more broadly. "They would explain everything by going back and finding a quote from Trotsky or from Lenin in order to explain things, as opposed to explaining how things were in the real world," Spira said. "They were basically just living in their own universe as opposed to making real life connections."

Beginning in the 1970s, after being exposed to Singer's work, Spira got involved in animal defense efforts. "Spira first gained notice in 1976 by leading a campaign seeking an end to the American Museum of Natural History's research on the impact of castration and other forms of mutilation on the sexual behavior of cats," according to Barnaby J. Feder. "When the research was halted in 1977, animal rights activists hailed the campaign as the first in more than a century of antivivisection efforts in the United States and Europe actually to result in an end to any animal testing."

Soon after, Spira organized a coalition of groups to oppose the use of Draize and LD/50 tests in the cosmetics industry. "The animal testing campaigns played a major role in forcing hospitals, government laboratories and universities to establish review boards to make sure that experiments used alternatives to animals — test-tube cultures, for example — where possible and to make sure that animals were not unnecessarily abused when they were used," Feder said, obviously describing reformist change. "Spira also negotiated with the cosmetics industry to provide initial financing to create the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore."

In the 1980s he turned his reformist energies toward the farm industry. "He led a successful campaign to end face branding of cattle and negotiated with McDonald's and other fast-food companies to get them to supervise the practices of their suppliers more closely," Feder said. Spira died in 1998 at the age of 71.

Pankhurst practiced prefigurative vegetarianism

By Jon Hochschartner

Sylvia Pankhurst, a socialist, Ethiopian nationalist and a feminist, practiced prefigurative vegetarianism for some time, apparently out of concern for non-human animals.

According to John P. Gerber, Pankhurst's "Socialist Workers' Federation and their publication, 'Workers' Dreadnought,'" was in Britain a "major theoretical center of left communism." Pankhurst's contacts included a veritable who's who of the European left. "She was in close touch with leading revolutionaries in Russia (Alexandra Kollantai), Germany (Clara Zetkin), Holland (Herman Gorter, Anton Pannekoek, Henrietta Roland Horst), Italy (Antonio Gramsci and Amadeo Bordiga) and even Hungary (Bela Kun)," according to Barbara Winslow. Vladimir Lenin criticized her directly in his 1920 book 'Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder' for her opposition to electoral reformism in Britain.

Interestingly, Pankhurst's mother, Emmeline Pankhurst, the suffragette leader, was also vegetarian for a time, according to 'Current Literature, Volume 45' a publication edited by Edward Jewitt Wheeler. The same source states Pankhurst's mother was an admirer of the anti-speciesist anarchist Louise Michel, although she did not accept "the erratic woman's political theories."

In 1907, Pankhurst, by all indications, ate non-human flesh. Recalling her time in prison early that year for her own feminist activism, she described the difficulties of vegetarians, but did not seem to count herself among this group. "When we had originally been put in the first class, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, who was a vegetarian, was daily served the usual prison diet, and though she was obliged to leave the meat, no extra vegetables were allowed her, and she was obliged to live on her potatoes and bread," Pankhurst said. "Now a special dietary had been introduced for vegetarians, which consisted at this season of an alternation of carrots and onions, with occasional rather stale eggs as a substitute for meat, and milk, night and morning, instead of cocoa and tea."

Decades later, Pankhurst was practicing prefigurative vegetarianism, for how long I'm unsure. But she gave it up following the outbreak of the Second World War. "Another change in the household resulted from the fact its mistress had been until then, on general humanitarian grounds, a vegetarian," according to her son, Richard Pankhurst. "But with the introduction of rationing — a system which she had advocated in the a First World War and greatly praised on account of its fairness — she felt it 'more practical' to turn to meat-eating like the population at

large."

As I've mentioned previously, I don't think individual dietary choices are particularly important to the animal struggle. But I wonder what this abandonment of vegetarianism meant for Pankhurst. Was she giving up what she saw merely as a symbolic gesture toward non-human solidarity? Or did her return to flesh-eating represent the low priority she placed on animal lives and suffering?

In later life, according to Winslow, "Pankhurst never made any attempt to rejoin or work with her former comrades in the Communist Party. Shocked and horrified by [Joseph] Stalin, she denounced the 1936 Moscow Trials as a brutal farce. Having known and admired [Nikolai] Bukharin in particular, she knew he had been framed by Stalin." Still, according to Winslow, Pankhurst considered herself a socialist for the remainder of her life. She would die of heart failure in late 1960 at the aged of 78.

Shaw was socialist animalist  
By Jon Hochschartner

The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, winner of the 1925 Nobel Prize in Literature, was a socialist animalist. A practitioner of prefigurative vegetarianism, Shaw was a critic of many forms of non-human exploitation, but is perhaps best known as an anti-vivisectionist.

In using the term 'animalist' here, I'm not referring to a follower of the fictional ideology in George Orwell's "Animal Farm." Although that ideology did have anti-speciesist elements! Nor am I referring to the theory written about by philosophers such as Eric T. Olson, which truth be told, I know nothing about. Rather I'm using the term 'animalist' to indicate someone who to one degree or another supports the animal liberation project, which activist Ronnie Lee defined as "an end to all persecution, exploitation and killing of other animals by human beings or for us to reach a situation that is as near to that as possible." By 'socialist animalist' I mean someone who supports both public ownership of the economy and animal liberation.

It should be mentioned that Shaw's brand of socialism, Fabianism, was scorned by many of the revolutionaries of his day. Friedrich Engels dismissed the Fabian Society as "a clique of bourgeois-socialists of diverse calibres, from careerists to sentimental socialists and philanthropists, united only by their fear of the threatening rule of the workers and doing all in their power to spike this danger by making their own leadership secure." Engels reserved only somewhat kinder words for Shaw himself, describing the writer as "very talented and witty as a

belletrist but absolutely useless as an economist and politician, although honest and not a careerist."

Shaw was clearly opposed to the exploitation of non-humans for food. He vividly described animal agriculture as the "monstrous habit of bringing millions of useless and disagreeable animals into existence for the express purpose of barbarously slaughtering them, roasting their corpses and eating them." The playwright apparently transitioned to vegetarianism in his mid-twenties, after reading the work of Percy Shelley. "I was a cannibal for twenty-five years," Shaw said. "For the rest I have been a vegetarian. It was Shelley who first opened my eyes to the savagery of my diet."

Shaw was critical of those animalists who presented the case for vegetarianism on the diet's health merits. "Why, if we prefer a clean and humane way of feeding ourselves to a nasty and cruel way, may we not say so, instead of raising foolish amateurish arguments about nitrogen and hydro-carbons and the rest of the figments of the science of 'metabolism?'" Shaw said. "I have not the slightest doubt, myself, that a diet of nice tender babies, carefully selected, cleanly killed, and tenderly cooked, would make us far healthier and handsomer than the haphazard dinners of to-day, whether carnivorous or vegetarian."

Shaw took his anti-vivisectionist comrades to task for the shortsightedness of their anti-speciesist politics. "On one occasion I was invited to speak at a large Anti-Vivisection meeting in the Queen's Hall in London," the playwright recalled. "I found myself on the platform with fox hunters, tame stage hunters, men and women whose calendar was divided, not by pay days and quarter days, but by seasons for killing animals for sport: the fox, the hare, the otter, the partridge and the rest having each appointed date for slaughter." When he spoke against animal exploitation broadly, rather than vivisection specifically, he found himself unwelcome at the gathering.

Regrettably, it appears that in his later years, like too many of those on the left, Shaw was duped into supporting an increasingly-tyrannical Soviet Russia. For instance, speaking of Joseph Stalin, who Shaw apparently met in person, the playwright said, "I have spent nearly three hours in Stalin's presence and observed him with keen curiosity, and I find it just as hard to believe that he is a vulgar gangster as that [Leon] Trotsky is an assassin." The anti-Stalinist socialist George Orwell claimed to see an authoritarian thread running through Shaw's writing. "No one has ever pointed out the sadistic and masochistic element in Bernard Shaw's work," Orwell said, "still less suggested that this probably has some connection to Shaw's admiration for dictators."

Engels loved killing animals  
By Jon Hochschartner

Friedrich Engels, close collaborator to Karl Marx, supported the torture of animals in the form of vivisection. This position perhaps should not be surprising given his passion for blood 'sports.'

Writing to Marx in August of 1881, Engels complained about a publication's pro-animal stance. "Since I've been here I have been taking The Daily News instead of the Standard," Engels said. "It is even more stupid, if that is possible. Preaches anti-vivisectionism! Also as deficient in news as the Standard."

Writing to Karl Kautsky later that same month, Engels referenced the same factory inspector Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue alluded to in a pro-testing article I've discussed previously. Kautsky appears to have written his own defense of involuntary non-human experimentation, called 'Die Vivisektion des Proletariats,' but I've been unable to find an English translation of it.

"In Nature, you will find a speech made by John Simon before the International Medical Conference here in which the bourgeoisie is virtually put on the mat by medical science," Engels said. "Now he, a doctor, finding his own special field invaded by the Church-led bourgeoisie and their anti-vivisection movement, has turned the tables on them."

Here Engels was explicitly linking anti-vivisectionist belief to the capitalist class, seemingly in particular a religious subset, which he saw as opposed to rational thought. Viewing themselves as rational thinkers, Engels and Marx were deeply impressed with the work of Charles Darwin. But as Steven Best pointed out, what they failed to glean from the naturalist's work was "Darwin's emphasis on the continuity of species, on the continuum of animal existence." This failure to accept the genuine implications of evolution allowed Engels to continue viewing animals as categorically different and inferior to humans.

"Instead of preaching dull and colourless sermons like Virchow, [Simon] goes into the attack comparing the few scientific experiments made by doctors on animals with the vast commercial experiments made by the bourgeoisie on the popular masses, thereby placing the question for the first time in its true perspective," Engels continued.

In a similar way that reactionary socialists might artificially counterpose the consideration of class and gender, or class and race, here Engels suggested a false dichotomy between political work on behalf of humans and political work on behalf of animals. I'd argue this dichotomy propagates what Marxists call 'false

consciousness,' in that it directs proletarian anger away from capitalists, the genuine exploiters of the working class, and toward animals and those humans who defend them. Triumphantly, Engels concluded, "The Congress, by the way, declared unanimously that vivisection was essential to science."

While I try to assess individuals' species politics based on their stated positions, rather than what might be failings in their personal practice, Engel's support for animal testing could perhaps be predicted by his enthusiasm for hunting non-humans. His speciesism, after all, was not a passive acceptance of our society's omnivory. Rather Engels actively sought out opportunities to kill animals for pleasure. He enjoyed it.

Writing to Marx in 1857, according to Tristram Hunt, Engels said, "On Saturday, I went out fox-hunting – seven hours in the saddle. That sort of thing always keeps me in a state of devilish excitement for several days; it's the greatest physical pleasure I know...At least 20 of the chaps fell off or came down, two horses were done for, one fox killed (I was in AT THE DEATH)."

Lafargue recalled Engels' gruesome talent and passion for murdering non-humans. "He was an excellent rider and had his own hunter for the fox chase," Lafargue said. "When the neighbouring gentry and aristocracy sent out invitations to all riders in the district according to the ancient feudal custom, he never failed to attend."

Engels eventually developed what Hunt, his biographer, describes with abhorrent approval as bloodlust. "Yesterday I let myself be talked into attending a coursing meeting at which hares are hunted with greyhounds, and spent seven hours in the saddle," Engels said. "All in all, it did me a power of good though it kept me from my work."

In defense of paid animal activists  
By Jon Hochschartner

Within the revolutionary pole of the anti-speciesist movement, it's popular to criticize the best funded animalist organizations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. This is understandable, given these organizations' frequent conservatism, which is necessary to their fundraising efforts. But often this criticism seems to bleed into criticism of paid activism more generally. In my opinion, such a stance against professional agitation is ultimately self-defeating.

When it comes down to it, whether animalists are paid greatly affects how much of their time they are able to dedicate to anti-speciesist work. This isn't a question



of their commitment. It's just an economic reality. Most of us have to work jobs that are in no way connected to the movement and dominate the overwhelming majority of our time and energy. When we get off the clock, we have very little of these resources left, and understandably choose to put them toward tending to our personal relationships, and eking out what little pleasure capitalism allows us.

And yet revolutionary animalists trumpet the importance of 'grassroots' and 'do-it-yourself' agitation incessantly, while seeming to condemn even the possibility of paying for such work. Of course, volunteer activism is important. But where funds might be raised to pay for such efforts, it is foolish not to do so. Salaries, wages, and even freelance payments, allow animalists to contribute more of their time and energy to anti-speciesist agitation.

How would support for paid activism apply within the socialist-animalist subset specifically? At the moment we might not be a large enough potential group, barring someone in our number being quite rich, to support even one full-time worker. But I believe we could raise enough funds to pay one or multiple pro-animal leftists to do some movement labor they wouldn't be able to justify otherwise. The most glaring need at the moment, in my opinion, is the establishment of an internet hub where anarchists, Marxists, and social-democrats who share similar views on the animal question could network and share ideas. Merely creating content on a regular basis for such a site would be a significant time commitment.

While there are other and perhaps better ways funds could be raised, the one that comes immediately to my mind is that based on a membership model. It could be similar to the one employed by the International Socialist Organization, which charges \$25 a month in dues. Those familiar with the ISO could rightly point out the paid leadership is for the most part unaccountable to the general membership. This isn't a problem inherent to organizations that rely on dues to pay staff. Rather the problem lies in the ISO's lack of genuine democratic mechanisms.

According to former member Pham Binh, this dynamic is created by the organization's closed-slate election system. "The previous year's Steering Committee submits the coming year's Steering Committee to the convention as a single bloc for an up-or-down vote by a show of hands rather than a secret ballot," Binh writes. A single Steering Committee member cannot be challenged without offering a whole new slate of a dozen names. As a result, Binh writes, "as far as anyone knows, the ISO has never had a competitive election for its Steering Committee since it was founded in 1977."

So here is one potential way in which anti-speciest leftists could raise funds to pay for movement work that might not otherwise be done. We could create an

organization. It could be called Socialists for Animal Liberation, or the Louise Michel Club, after the pro-animal communard, or Friends of Mimi, after Rosa Luxemburg's cat. It really doesn't matter. Membership in the group would require payment of \$25 a month in dues. If we had a mere 20 members, that would give us \$500 a month to play around with. Personally, I would love to see such funds used to compensate someone for administering a socialist-animalist website, the need for which I discussed earlier, and pay freelancers to regularly contribute high-quality articles on the intersection of class and species. As a writer, I'm surely biased. But the point is that in a democratic organization, we could vote to use this money however we see fit and pay animalists to do work for which they might not otherwise be able to expend the time or energy.

### Soviets exploited dogs as living explosives

By Jon Hochschartner

In the Second World War, the Soviet Union exploited dogs as living, anti-tank explosives in their fight against the Germans, following Adolf Hitler's 1941 breaking of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The agreement between the two nations, which had been made in the summer of 1939, was, according to the exiled Bolshevik Leon Trotsky, an "extra gauge with which to measure the degree of degeneration of the [Soviet] bureaucracy, and its contempt for the international working class."

"The training [of the non-humans] was innovative, to say the least, and cringe-inducing in its cruelty," Bryan D. Cummins said. "Accustomed to carrying explosives on their backs, the dogs were kept hungry and fed only under moving tanks. Thus the unfortunate dogs learned to anticipate the weight on their backs, the rumblings of the tanks and a meal. Each dog is alleged to have carried 30 pounds (13 kg) of explosives on its back, to be detonated by wooden levers on their backpacks that hit against the underbelly of the tank as the dog ran under it, seeking food."

The plan largely backfired, Cummins said, because the dogs, trained to look under Soviet-made tanks for food, did so in the field as well, ignoring the German vehicles. In one case, Soviet troops shot all of their involuntary canine soldiers to prevent them from inadvertently destroying Russian tanks. Still, Cummins said, "the Soviets claimed that several German tanks had, in fact, been destroyed using anti-tank [dogs] at the Battle of Kursk in 1943 and captured German documents corroborate the claim."

In his memoir, Soviet soldier Mansur Abdulin recalled meeting the dogs condemned to death. "As someone who grew up in the Siberian forestland, I really

love dogs, and I was appalled to learn about the fate of these creatures," Abdulin said. "What does a meek animal, so dear to children, have to do with this mess? A dog is a faithful friend. Yet we were apparently sending these trusting companions to die under enemy tanks!"

Later, according to Abdulin, during a German attack, perhaps five of the starved dogs, looking for food, were killed by the explosives strapped to their backs. The animals' deaths repelled the Nazi advance, causing his comrades to celebrate. He felt he should be happy too. "But instead I wept, cursing the war and the monsters who started it," Abdulin said.

For its part, the United States War Department was inspired by the Soviet Union's exploitation of dogs, and started a similar trial program at Fort Belvoir in 1943. However, according to John M. Kistler, "rather than targeting enemy armor, the animals were trained as 'bunker busters' to enter Japanese tunnels and fortifications with timed explosives." Thankfully, nothing came of the program. This was for two central reasons. "No one could be certain that the dog would always go to the target and not return to 'friendlies' and accidentally blow up allies," Kistler said. "[And] no one would donate their dogs to the military once it was learned they might be used as suicide bombers."

### London inspired influential animalist group By Jon Hochschartner

Many may not be aware that the famed novelist Jack London, author of "The Call of the Wild" and "The Iron Heel" among others, was a socialist. Fewer still might be aware that the writer, who often wrote from the point of view of non-humans, inspired the creation of a powerful animalist organization. Sadly, London's legacy was tarnished, above all, by his racism.

A member of the Socialist Labor Party before joining the Socialist Party of America, London launched a nationwide lecture tour on the subject of working-class revolution in 1906, according to Ira Kipnis. He was an admirer of the Industrial Workers of the World, and met with the Wobbly leader 'Big Bill' Haywood, "although he never joined them in going so far as to recommend sabotage," Clarice Stasz said. After London died at the age of 40, the great socialist Eugene Debs expressed his condolences in a letter to the writer's widow. "Your beloved husband was very dear to me as he was to many thousands of others who never had the privilege of laying their eyes upon him," Debs said. "I felt the great heart of him, loved him, read nearly everything he wrote, and rejoiced in applauding his genius."

London was, according to Lucy Robins Lang, a proselytizing vegetarian for a time, before returning to omnivority. One is unsure whether his temporary abstinence from meat was motivated by concern for animals, and if so, whether his return to flesh represented the abandonment of what he merely saw as a symbolic gesture toward non-human solidarity or the low priority he placed on animal lives and suffering.

In the preface to his novel 'Michael, Brother of Jerry,' which was published after his death, London argued readers should join animal-welfare organizations. "First, let all humans inform themselves of the inevitable and eternal cruelty by the means of which only can animals be compelled to perform before revenue-paying audiences," London wrote. "Second, I suggest that all men and women, and boys and girls, who have so acquainted themselves with the essentials of the fine art of animal-training, should become members of, and ally themselves with, the local and national organizations of humane societies and societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals."

London advocated walkouts of performances that exploited animals as entertainment. "We will not have to think of anything, save when, in any theatre or place of entertainment, a trained-animal turn is presented before us," London said. "Then, without premeditation, we may express our disapproval of such a turn by getting up from our seats and leaving the theatre for a promenade and a breath of fresh air outside, coming back, when the turn is over, to enjoy the rest of the programme. All we have to do is just that to eliminate the trained-animal turn from all public places of entertainment."

According to Earle Labor, his call "was answered with the formation of the Jack London Club dedicated to this crusade. The club achieved an international membership of nearly one million before its disruption by the Second World War." In 1925, in response to protests by the Jack London Club, the Ringling-Barnum and Bailey circus removed all animal acts from their performances, according to Diane L. Beers. As modern socialist animalist Jason Hribal stated, this was "an extraordinary feat which no contemporary organization, such as PETA, HSUS, or the ASPCA, has yet to accomplish." Sadly the victory was short lived. "Just five years later, Charles Ringling announced that his show would once again include trained big cats," Beers said.

Again, it should be mentioned that London's legacy was marred by racism. "As therapy Jack plunged into the works of Nietzsche," according to London's biographer Alex Kershaw. "Nietzsche, like Jack, believed that different races inherited different traits, although he condemned racism. Jack overlooked this key distinction, or perhaps chose to ignore it. Anglo-Saxons, he believed, were the only true supermen. Lesser breeds -- racial weaklings -- should make way for the

Anglo-Saxons, who would alone determine the destiny of the human race."

The socialist George Orwell argued that London betrayed other right-wing tendencies. I don't know enough about London to have an informed opinion on the matter. But Orwell went further, seeming to identify London's empathy with non-humans as indication of latent fascism, which is puzzlingly problematic. "In an intellectual way London accepted the conclusions of Marxism, and he imagined that the 'contradictions' of capitalism, the unconsumable surplus and so forth, would persist even after the capitalist class had organized themselves into a single corporate body," Orwell said. "Temperamentally he was very different from the majority of Marxists. With his love of violence and physical strength, his belief in 'natural aristocracy', his animal-worship and exaltation of the primitive, he had in him what one might fairly call a Fascist strain."

Steinem is anti-vivisectionist  
By Jon Hochschartner

Gloria Steinem, honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, has spoken against vivisection and the abuse of companion animals. Her view of other forms of non-human exploitation are unclear. Steinem is perhaps best known as a leading second-wave feminist who co-founded Ms. Magazine.

In a 2014 interview with iBerkshires, Steinem was asked whether she saw a link between the subjugation of non-humans and the subjugation of women. "Yes, actually I do and it's interesting statistically it's true," she said. "The vast majority of the animal rights individual human beings are females." Steinem made a stronger statement regarding this connection, according to a 2007 blog post on the People For Ethical Treatment of Animals website. Protesting Covance Inc.'s use of vivisection, she said, "Animal abuse is connected to domestic abuse — literally in a household, but societally in a more general way, too."

In another PETA post, which is undated, Steinem was quoted in opposition to vivisection performed by the National Institutes of Health. "I am adding my voice to others calling for an end to these and other cruel and useless experiments — on behalf of the animals who are being pointlessly made to suffer and die, on behalf of women whose health concerns are starved for funds, and on behalf of taxpayers who are being defrauded," she said. Her prescription for this 'triple injustice,' as she apparently called it, was merely to reduce the usage of animals in testing. One is unsure if this reformism is tactical or ideological. "I am writing to ask that you address this cruelty, fraud, and waste by drastically reducing reliance on animal models, and improving oversight of grant monies, thus also saving the energy of citizen protest for causes that allow us all to move forward together," Steinem

said. "You must understand that this goes beyond even the famous Golden Fleece Award for wasted tax dollars. In this case, there is blood on the fleece."

I don't believe there are individual solutions to systemic problems like animal exploitation, so I don't particularly care about personal dietary choices. Animalists should be working toward public veganism that is legally enforced at the point of production. Trying to create mass, voluntary change at the point of consumption is a Sisyphean task. But in attempting to assess individuals' species politics, I often check to see whether they practice vegetarianism or veganism, as this can of be a symbolic representation of their opposition to animal slaughter. As it happens, Steinem is some kind of flexitarian, according to a biography of her Patricia Cronin Marcello. But Steinem's diet was not apparently inspired by concern for non-humans. "I'm also a modified vegetarian," she said. "I eat seafood and dairy products but not red meat or chicken, as a result of having breast cancer."

It should be said that, like anyone else, Steinem is not without her critics, including those coming from her economic left. For instance, writing in 2005, Sharon Smith, a leader of the International Socialist Organization and author of 'Women and Socialism: Essays on Women's Liberation,' suggested Steinem was not truly committed to class struggle. "While it is true that the Gloria Steinem of today is quite different than the Gloria Steinem of 1970 — the change in feminism has not been qualitative," Smith said. "Occasional lip service aside, mainstream feminism has never sought to represent any other class of women than the upper-middle class. Feminism has merely evolved to reflect the changing circumstances of this class of women."

Animalists should focus on commonalities, not differences  
By Jon Hochschartner

There's a great joke, of which there seem to be many variations, about the ludicrousness of a certain kind of sectarianism, that animalists could learn from. There appear to be many variations of the gag. In a 2005 article for the Guardian, comedian Emo Phillips claimed to have come up with the it, originally using the context of Christian denominations. But I originally heard the joke in the context of socialism. It was very similar, if not identical, to the version reposted to Louis Proyect's blog, 'The Unrepentant Marxist,' which goes like this.

An elderly fellow named Sam was walking along the Brooklyn Bridge one day when he saw a man of similar age, standing on a ledge, about to jump. Sam ran toward the other man, shouting not to kill himself. The other guy, who we'll call Joe, asked why not? He'd been a socialist all of his life and the possibility of working-class revolution seemed as hopeless as ever. Surprised, Sam said he was a

socialist as well, before asking Joe if he had been in Communist Party USA. Joe said he had. Sam said he had too, before continuing, "Did you join the pro-Trotsky Communist League of America in 1928, which later merged with the American Workers Party to form the Workers Party of America in 1934?" Joe answered in the affirmative.

Sam exclaimed, "Spooky, me too! After the WPA was expelled from the Socialist Party of America in 1936 did you go on to join the Socialist Workers Party USA and the Fourth International?" Joe said he did. It went on like this, question after question revealing their common trajectory in the history of leftist sectarianism. Sam asked, "In the 1940 dispute did you side with Cannon or Shachtman?" He found that they both sided with James P. Cannon. Sam continued, "In 1962 did you join Robertson's opposition caucus, the Revolutionary Tendency?" And the man on the ledge did, just like Sam.

Sam said, "And I bet that like me you were expelled and went on to join the International Communist League?" Joe said that went without saying. Sam plowed further, "In 1985 did you join the International Bolshevik Tendency who claimed that the Sparts had degenerated into an 'obedience cult?'" Joe said he hadn't, which Sam hadn't either. Finally, Sam asked, "In 1998 did you join the Internationalist Group after the Permanent Revolution Faction were expelled from the ICL?" Joe answered he had joined the Internationalist Group, and exhilarated by their shared history, began to reconsider suicide. But Sam pushed Joe off the bridge, shouting, "Die, counterrevolutionary scum!"

At the risk of ruining the joke, the humor here, of course, largely comes from how much Sam and Joe had in common in relation to an already microscopic political subset, but how ultimately none of that mattered. When Sam discovered they shared a tiny, irrelevant difference, he had to literally destroy Joe. Ironically, Sam opposed Joe with far more vehemence than he might someone whose politics were genuinely well to the right of his.

This dynamic should sound very familiar to animalists, and one imagines the gag could be easily rewritten for our context. We all know the countless fault lines — whether one supports individual violence, whether one supports the large non-profits, whether one is a reformist, whether one is a tactical reformist. The different ideological litmus tests we have created, and I certainly include myself in this, are endless. And the great irony is that to those outside the incredibly marginalized anti-speciesist movement, none of these differences matter. To them, we are all those 'animal-rights wackos,' just like, to an uninvolved observer, Sam and Joe are both 'socialist nut jobs.'

Our elevation of the comparatively minor tactical or ideological differences

between us is really an expression of the powerlessness of our movement. Consciously or not, when we do this, we are conceding that societal change on behalf of animals, however minor, is impossible. We retreat into a sectarian hovel, where we duke it out amongst ourselves, quixotically fighting those who deviate from the correct anti-speciesist line. This of course, doesn't help animals. The only way to create real change for non-humans is to create a mass movement, which involves coalition building with those one might not entirely agree, including those whose species politics are reformist. We have to unite.

## HSUS founder implicated in Red Scare

By Jon Hochschartner

Researching an ebook series I'm writing, I recently came across the allegation that Fred Myers, a founder of the Humane Society of the United States, was a communist. The charge appeared on HumaneWatch.org, a website maintained by the Center for Consumer Freedom, a shadowy corporate front group. Needless to say, as a socialist animalist, the accusation did not have the desired effect on me. Far from being a scarlet letter for HSUS, an organization with comparatively conservative species politics, it was a potential badge of honor. Sadly, there appears to be no substantive evidence that Myers was a communist, and if he were, he likely would have been a supporter of counter-revolutionary Joseph Stalin.

According to the HSUS website, "Fred Myers provided the essential vision, determination, and direction the fledgling organization needed. Under his leadership, The HSUS not only survived its first decade, but established itself as a national animal-protection organization that addressed cruelties which lay beyond the capacity of local societies and state federations."

Myers testified before an investigative Senate subcommittee about his alleged communist ties on May 15, 1956, by which time historians argue the worst of the second Red Scare was drawing to a close. At this point he was executive director of the newly formed HSUS. Myers was questioned primarily by chief counsel Robert Morris. The first aspect of Myers biography that Morris wanted to probe was Myers' chairmanship of the New York Daily Mirror unit of the New York Newspaper Guild in the 1930s. A New York Times reporter had testified that at the time Myers was a communist.

Apparently within the Guild at the time of Myers involvement, there was a right and left-wing faction. The left-wing faction was accused of being run by communists. Morris wanted to know with which Myers sided. "I was aligned with the faction which was accused of being Communist-led," Myers said. In response to further questions, he denied being a communist in the 1930s, and said he had no



memory of his accuser, Clayton Knowles, whatsoever. But Myers said he had no doubt the left-wing faction included communists, and that in fact he had no doubt about this at the time. "I was strongly of the opinion that the cause that the guild espoused was good," Myers said. "I thought it expedient and good to work with whoever would ally himself in that cause. I quite freely worked with people whom I thought to be or suspected of being Communists." Senator James Eastland asked Myers whether he had been a 'fellow traveler,' by which was meant someone sympathetic to communist goals but not a member of a communist organization. Myers denied this.

The interrogation then moved to Myers' tenure as executive director of the American-Russian Institute, following the end of the Second World War and Myer's public-relations work for the American Society for Russian Relief, for which he received the Soviet's Order of the Red Banner of Labor. According to Morris, both Myer's predecessor and successor at the Institute had invoked the Fifth Amendment when asked about their communist affiliations. Morris then questioned Myers about a trip he took to the Soviet Union.

As the testimony continued, it emerged that Myers had actually lost a job at New York Central Railroad in the late 1940s as a result of the Red Scare when the New York World-Telegram ran a story accusing him of being a communist. "I want to make the point perfectly clear that I have not at any time in any employment concealed anything about my career or my personal activities," Myers said. "I have nothing to be ashamed of."

HumaneWatch.org hosts a letter, dated 1958, it claims is from Larry Andrews, another HSUS founder, to a Senate subcommittee, in which Andrews accuses Myers of being a communist and having committed perjury in his 1956 testimony. "Myers is a communist and hence an enemy of our country," Andrews said. "Unless he is exposed and dismissed from his position, he will continue to dupe sincere, but gullible persons of wealth in the humane movement." Ludicrously, Andrews went on to suggest HSUS might be a communist front. While the letter certainly appears genuine, I've been unable to find it sourced anywhere but HumaneWatch.org. In an email to me, a representative of the Center for Consumer Freedom said he believed the letter was obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request.

De Moura opposed animal testing  
By Jon Hochschartner

Born in 1887, Maria Lacerda de Moura, a Brazilian left-wing radical, was an opponent of animal testing. While she is often identified as an individualist

anarchist, this seems reductive, as numerous sources describe her as a supporter of class struggle who condemned capitalism.

According to Francesca Miller, de Moura was "sympathetic to the goals of international socialism, but rejected all political affiliation." Miller suggested she did this on feminist grounds, quoting from a 1932 book written by the leftist. "Up until now, which has been the party or program that presented a solution for the problem of female happiness?" de Moura said. "Who remembered to liberate women? ...Fatherland, home, society, religion, morality, good manners, civil and political rights, communism, fascism, every other ism, revolutions, and barricades...continues to be the slave, an instrument skillfully manipulated by men for their sectarian, power-hungry, economic, religious, political, or social causes."

She distanced herself from the mainstream of the feminist movement, June Edith said, "apparently feeling that the franchise would chiefly benefit middle-class women rather than aid the bulk of Brazil's population or alter the country's social structure." But de Moura "found no constituency for a socialist feminist movement," according to Susan K. Besse.

In a 2011 article titled 'Representations of science and technology in Brazilian anarchism,' Gilson Leandro Queluz provided rare English quotes from de Moura regarding animal testing. "I can only understand vivisection as a frenzy of unspeakable evil," de Moura said. "I cannot even see the advantage of the scientific drunkenness that puts thousands of guinea pigs and dogs and any kind of animal at the mercy of 'scientists.'"

De Moura was aghast at the experiments performed by the French surgeon Serge Voronoff, as many seem to have been. Voronoff, a frequent vivisectionist, was best known for involuntarily transplanting chimpanzees' testicles onto human males in an effort to cure impotence. "By 1923 forty-three men had received testicles from nonhuman primates, and by the end of Voronoff's career, that number reached thousands," according to Nathan Wolfe. "Although Voronoff had inherited a fortune as an heir to a vodka manufacturer, he made more money operating on many of the most important men of his day."

De Moura argued the surgeon's procedures represented "quack science of modern industrialism, the science that served the golden calf, the science of human vampirism exhausted by early senility that sucks the glands of animals." And Voronoff's clients, she said, were "old, wealthy and powerful men, whose conscience was crushed by parasitism, whose safes were enriched at the expense of the exploitation of thousands and thousands of workers, at the expense of the martyrdom and servility of the human herd."

There appears to be more material available elsewhere regarding her species politics, but it's only in Portuguese. One hopes an enterprising socialist animalist familiar with the language might investigate this. Some sources state de Moura died in 1944, while others say she passed away a year later in 1945. She would have been in her late 50s.

Lafargue promoted speciesist false consciousness  
By Jon Hochschartner

In his 1900 essay, "The Rights of the Horse and the Rights of Man," Paul Lafargue, son-in-law to Karl Marx and a revolutionary in his own right, promoted what socialists should recognize as a speciesist form of false consciousness, in that he directed proletarian anger away from capitalists, the genuine exploiters of the working class, and toward animals and those humans who defend them.

"Progress and Civilization may be hard on wage-working humanity but they have all a mother's tenderness for the animals which stupid bipeds call 'lower,'" Lafargue said. "Civilization has especially favored the equine race: it would be too great a task to go through the long list of its benefactions; I will name but a few, of general notoriety, that I may awaken and inflame the passionate desires of the workers, now torpid in their misery."

Lafargue, presumably speaking somewhat with tongue in cheek, divided horses into what he termed aristocratic and proletarian classes, with the former made up of non-human individuals exploited for racing and the latter included those exploited for more general work purposes. For Lafargue, an animal hater, the abuse of horses in both these categories was far too gentle.

"The equine aristocracy enjoys so many and so oppressive privileges, that if the human-faced brutes which serve them as jockeys, trainers, stable valets and grooms were not morally degraded to the point of not feeling their shame, they would have rebelled against their lords and masters, whom they rub down, groom, brush and comb, also making their beds, cleaning up their excrements and receiving bites and kicks by way of thanks," Lafargue said, identifying animals as beneficiaries of class exploitation with an unclear degree of seriousness.

"Aristocratic horses, like capitalists, do not work; and when they exercise themselves in the fields they look disdainfully, with a contempt, upon the human animals which plow and seed the lands, mow and rake the meadows, to provide them with oats, clover, timothy and other succulent plants."

I'm not familiar with the racing industry of Lafargue's era, but I doubt he was either, as I find it hard to believe the industry was significantly more 'humane,' to

use an anthropocentric term, than that of our era. In today's industry, for instance, horses are regularly killed by heat stroke in races, lethal injection inflicted due to competition-related injuries, or simple slaughter when they're no longer profitable. Were it possible for members of the proletariat to switch places with these animals, I sincerely doubt any informed human workers would want to do so.

"Thrice happy is it for proletarian humanity that these equine aristocrats have not taken the fancy of feeding upon human flesh, like the old Bengal tigers which rove around the villages of India to carry off women and children; if unhappily the horses had been man-eaters, the capitalists, who can refuse them nothing, would have built slaughter-houses for wage-workers, where they could carve out and dress boy sirloins, woman hams and girl roasts to satisfy their anthropophagic tastes," Lafargue mused. This attempt at satire, it should be noted, implicitly concedes the exploitation of domesticated animals is in most cases worse than that of human workers.

"The proletarian horses, not so well endowed, have to work for their peck of oats, but the capitalist class, through deference for the aristocrats of the equine race, concedes to the working horses rights that are far more solid and real than those inscribed in the 'Rights of Man,'" Lafargue said, with offensive ignorance of the exploitation endured by horses used in both competition and labor. "We may still recall the noble indignation of the bourgeois press when it learned that the omnibus company was using peat and tannery waste in its stalls as a substitute for straw: to think of the unhappy horses having such poor litters!"

Again and again, Lafargue tried to manufacture an inherent link between anti-speciesism and defense of capitalist exploitation. "The more delicate souls of the bourgeoisie have in every capitalist country organized societies for the protection of animals," he said scornfully. "Schopenhauer, the bourgeois philosopher, in whom was incarnated so perfectly the gross egoism of the philistine, could not hear the cracking of a whip without his heart being torn by it."

Lafargue's speciesism, which is all too common on the socialist left, should be seen for what it is, a form of false consciousness, like homophobia, sexism or racism, which misdirects proletarian rage away from capitalists, who are actually responsible for worker exploitation, toward other victims of the ruling class who face special oppression and exploitation within the current order.

Wolfe likely motivated by animalist concern  
By Jon Hochschartner

Born in 1875, Lilian Wolfe, whose name is spelled in different ways in different

sources, was a British feminist, anarchist and vegetarian. According to George Woodcock, she was a friend and collaborator to the influential anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin. Given her residency at the Whiteway Colony, a community inspired by Leo Tolstoy, one might assume her diet was inspired by concern for animals.

The seriousness with which Wolfe seemed to regard her vegetarianism can be seen in her steadfastness to the diet during her incarceration for opposing World War I. "The anarchists round the newspaper Freedom had their own anti-war organization," Sheila Rowbotham said. "Lilian Woolf, an ex-suffragette who became an anarchist, was imprisoned [in 1916] for giving out anti-war leaflets to troops. Pregnant and unmarried on principle, she remained a vegetarian in prison and was forced to drink cabbage water to provide herself with some nutrition."

While I no longer put much emphasis on the importance of prefigurative vegetarianism or veganism, I must admire her tenacity in this instance, even if it was for what I see now as a mostly symbolic end. When I spent a mere 40 hours in jail for my 2011 involvement in the Occupy Wall Street movement, I'm sure I betrayed my prefigurative veganism numerous times, which I then took very seriously, at least publicly. I abjured the offerings that obviously contained animal products, such as the cartons of cows' milk and cows' cheese sandwiches. The former prompted many jokes contrasting 1 percent milk fat and OWS' signature phraseology regarding the economic division of society. But I ate peanut butter sandwiches I suspect were made with honey. The bread for these also could have contained animal products. I just wanted to keep my head down.

How much time Wolfe served in custody is unclear. She "was sentenced to £25 or two months and went to prison, but there discovered she was pregnant (at the age of 40), so paid the fine and was released," according to Donald Rooum. She administrated Freedom Press, which identified with libertarian communism, for much of her life. "For more than twenty-five years Lilian Wolfe was the centre of the administration of Freedom Press at its various premises in London," Nicolas Walter said. "She was the person on whom every organization depends — the completely reliable worker who runs the office, opening and closing the shop, answering the telephone and the post, doing accounts and keeping people in touch. She maintained personal contact with the thousands of people who read the paper."

When the socialist George Orwell was sick with tuberculosis in 1949, an illness that eventually claimed his life, Orwell's young son, Richard Blair, was sent to live at the Whiteway Colony, near the sanitarium where his father was being treated. He was placed in Wolfe's care. Orwell, it should be mentioned, was hostile to what Whiteway represented. "If only the sandals and pistachio-colored shirts could be

put in a pile and burnt, and every vegetarian, teetotaler and creeping Jesus sent home to Welwyn Garden City to do his yoga exercises quietly," Orwell said. "As with the Christian religion, the worst advertisement for Socialism is its adherents."

For what it's worth, Blair seemed to enjoy his time at Whiteway. "As far as I can recall I was perfectly happy there and even attended a local kindergarten for a few weeks, until mid-August," Blair said. "I remember regularly waiting with someone to catch a bus to go and visit my father and, on arrival, would always ask him where it hurt."

Orwell described Whiteway and Wolfe herself with no small amount of condescension. The community was "some sort of anarchist colony run, or financed, by the old lady whose name I forget who keeps the Freedom Bookshop," Orwell said. For Walter, this was quite a strange twist. "How nice to know that at the very end of his life Orwell was helped by a high-minded woman who was not only an anarchist but a pacifist, and also a vegetarian and a teetotaler," Walter said. "A perfect irony to close the case of Orwell and the anarchists!" Wolfe died in 1974, at the age of 98.

How does historical materialism affect animal liberation?

By Jon Hochschartner

Socialist animalists should consider how, if at all, the materialist conception of history, an important facet of Marxism, affects their view of the way in which animal liberation can be achieved. To be clear, I'm using the term 'animal liberation' to mean an end to domestication and other forms of exploitation of other species by humans, or a situation as near to that as possible.

First it's important to understand what Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels meant by saying they viewed history from a materialist perspective. "When we say that Karl Marx was a materialist, we don't mean that he hankered after possessions," socialist Paul D'Amato said. "And when we say that Marx was not an idealist, we aren't saying he didn't have ideas about how to change the world. In the history of the philosophy, idealism and materialism have very different meanings than their popular usage. They represent the two main divergent ways of looking at the world we live in." D'Amato went on to explain the difference between these two divergent views. "For the idealist, the mind—or the spirit, in the form of God—is the origin of all material things," D'Amato said. "For the materialist, all of reality is based on matter, including the human brain which is itself a result of the organization of matter in a particular way."

The materialist conception of history, subsequently dubbed historical materialism,

attempts to trace changes in human economic and societal forms to changes in productive capacity and technology. In contrast, "most historical inquiry is arbitrary in that it fails to discover the key material factors that shape history," D'Amato said. "The idealist conception—that ideas shape history—is the least satisfactory because it is the most arbitrary. It cannot explain why particular ideas arise at a certain moment in history, or why at that particular moment in history those ideas were able to influence the course of events."

Scholars still debate the degree to which Marx and Engel's historical materialism was deterministic. One quote, for instance, from *The Poverty of Philosophy*, published in 1847, suggests Marx was a strong fatalist. "In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations," Marx said. "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist." Similarly, Marx and Engels come across as hard determinists in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers," the pair wrote. "Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

Applying what might be called an overly-deterministic view of historical materialism to the possibilities of animal liberation, one might say that, like the triumph of the working class, an end to non-human exploitation is inevitable, but widespread anti-speciesism is impossible without the further development of technologies such as in-vitro meat, and thus individual animalist struggle is useless in the here and now. In my gloomier moments, this is certainly a thought that has passed my mind. But D'Amato cautioned against such an interpretation, drawing on quotes from Marx and Engels which support a greater degree of agency.

In 1852, for instance, Marx argued, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Similarly, in 1890 Engels stated, "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase."

D'Amato seemed to uphold the value of individual struggle by citing an observation made by Georgi Plekhanov, in which the Russian revolutionary asked why Marx and Engels would expend so much energy attempting to raise class-consciousness if socialism would be achieved solely through economic necessity. D'Amato summed up what he viewed as an accurate interpretation of the

materialist conception of history this way. "Ideas do change history, but only if they become material forces, supported by masses of people, and in conditions that make the establishment of new social relationships a real possibility," D'Amato said. "To put it crudely, the dream of a society that shares the wealth so that everyone can lead a decent life is merely a dream if the material means of producing that wealth aren't sufficiently developed so there is enough to go around."

So what are the conditions necessary for an end to non-human exploitation? What conditions, if any, are we lacking? How does the material conception of history affect our view of how animal liberation can be achieved?

Classical Marxism is inherently speciesist, must be retheorized  
By Jon Hochschartner

Classical Marxism is inherently speciesist and thus it should be the intellectual priority of socialist animalists to retheorize the position of non-humans within the system of thought. In classical Marxism, domesticated animals are literally reduced to machinery. So long as this is unchallenged, an anti-speciesist Marxism is impossible.

For instance in the first volume of his landmark *Capital*, Karl Marx wrote, "An accessory may be consumed by the instruments of labour, as coal under a boiler, oil by a wheel, [or] hay by draft-horses." Further in the same text, he said, "The difference between tool and machine is that in the case of a tool, man is the motive power, while the motive power of a machine is something different from man, as, for instance, an animal, water, wind, and so on. According to this, a plough drawn by oxen, which is a contrivance common to the most different epochs, would be a machine." In capitalist society, the instruments of labor, which according to classical Marxism include animals, are monopolized by the capitalist class. Under socialism, these instruments would simply be socialized, which from the animals' perspective means merely a change in ownership.

While I'm incredibly far from an expert in the minutiae of Marxist theory, to my mind Barbara Noske began the important work of imagining an anti-speciesist Marxism in a credible and convincing way. In her book *'Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals'* Noske argued that domesticated animals suffer alienation in a similar manner to the human working class. Marx delineated four types of alienation which included, according to Noske, "alienation from the product, from productive activity, from species life and from fellow-humans."

For Noske, domesticated animals, like human workers, are alienated from the products of their labor. "Animals are being alienated from their own products



which consist of either their own offspring or (parts of) their own body," she said. "In production, animals are made to have as many young as possible, which are taken away from them almost immediately after birth...The body which makes up an important part of the animal 'self' used to be steered largely by the animal itself but has now become like a machine in the hands of management and is actually working against the animal's own interests."

Noske said that domesticated animals, like human workers, are also alienated from their productive activity. "Both the body itself and the bodily functions have been appropriated by the factory management and have been put to use in one capacity only," she said. "The emphasis on one skill usually results in deskilling the animal in almost every other way. Calves, for example, are only supposed to fatten, either in confinement crates or on metal-slat floors. The fact that crate calves lose the ability to stand at all or that metal-slat floors cause permanent lameness is of no concern to the management as long as it does not interfere with the fattening process — the calf's assigned task."

Domesticated animals are alienated from their species life as are human workers, Noske argued. "An animal's species life encompasses just about everything: product, productive activity and the animal's relation to nature and its own society," she said. "We now have come to the stage where the animal has almost totally been incorporated into human technology. This is not to say that animals were not exploited under, say, feudalism, but present-day capitalism tends to eliminate anything in the animal which cannot be made productive. The animal is modified to suit the production system, and its offending parts simply cut off. Moreover, the animal is deprived of its own society which is not replaced in any way."

Just as human workers are alienated from their fellow human workers, Noske said, domesticated animals are alienated from their fellow animals. "Capitalist industrial production has either removed the animals from their own societies or has grossly distorted these societies by crowding the animals in great numbers," she said. "It should not be forgotten that animals are not just biological organisms — most domesticated species are highly social; both external nature and their own society are crucial to their existence. The importance of communication, skin contact, social play and social learning is well known."

We need to develop an anti-speciesist Marxism, and while I'm not an expert in the intricacies of theory, I believe Noske lays groundwork we could potentially build on.

Wilde discusses species and class  
By Jon Hochschartner

The socialist animalist Lawrence Wilde is an emeritus professor of political theory at Nottingham Trent University in England. Author of the article 'The Creatures Too Shall Be Free: Marx and the human/animal distinction,' Wilde has been a member of the British Labour Party since 1975. He resigned in protest of the Iraq War before resuming membership in 2010. I recently interviewed him over email regarding his thoughts on the intersection of class and species. "Politically, I would describe myself as a socialist," Wilde said. "Intellectually, I'm a radical humanist."

Wilde argued that speciesism was used to further human class exploitation. "By 'speciesism' I take to mean the denial that other species have intrinsic value, so that they may be treated in any way that is useful for humans," Wilde said. "This attitude endorses exploitation – animals are subjected to factory farming methods to yield the cheapest meat, allegedly for the benefit of humans. The process is analogous to workers being treated without any regard for their human needs, as described at length by [Karl] Marx in chapter 10 and 15 of *Capital*, which comprises more than a quarter of the whole text. Ideologically, speciesism contradicts the human potential for compassion, without which alienation can never be overcome."

Asked what areas of the relationship of humans and animals in Marxism were particularly undertheorized, Wilde seemed to suggest Ted Benton's 1993 book 'Natural Relations: Ecology, Animal Rights and Social Justice' filled many gaps. "Although I disagree with his conclusion that Marx was guilty of 'species imperialism,'" Wilde said. "I suggest that the English translations of Marx's work use words such as 'mere' and 'primitive' that are simply not there in the original, and that Marx's discussion of the difference between humans and other animals does not imply superiority/inferiority."

Wilde argued that, at the very least, Marxism implied some commitment to animal welfare. "Historical materialism is a theory of historical development that points to the present capitalist mode of production as being the ultimate mode of exploitation, the transcendence of which will achieve human emancipation," Wilde said. "In terms of the alienation thesis, this means that the human essence can finally be realised, but this must involve, as Marx said, the transformation of the relationship between human and non-human nature. This is why Marx, in 1844, approvingly cited Thomas Münzer's demand that 'the creatures too shall be free.' Respect for human nature requires respect for non-human nature. Of course this is subject to different interpretation; at the least it means ensuring good animal welfare."

Wilde defended the value of prefigurative veganism. "Individual ethical choices should never be dismissed because they do not directly address systemic

problems," he said. "Individual responses demand attention to the issue at hand and can have unexpected consequences, such as securing the cooperation of supermarkets on issues such as battery farming." But Wilde saw a vegan capitalism as unlikely. "It is difficult to imagine a practice based on compassion to be compatible with one based on exploitation," he said.

Asked to weigh in on the debate between socialist animalists Jason Hribal, who argued animals are part of the working class, and Bob Torres, who argued animals are superexploited living commodities, Wilde sided with Torres. "The bigger question is whether or not animals belong to the same moral community as humans," Torres said. "As a humanist I would argue that our different capacities mean that humans alone form a moral community, but that the successful pursuit of human flourishing (eudaemonia) is possible only by fully developing the human potential for compassion. This would transform the relationship between humans and non-human animals."

Towards a Marxist animalism  
By Jon Hochschartner

To develop a Marxist animalism, we must situate non-humans within the labor theory of value, building on the intellectual groundwork laid by anti-speciesists like Barbara Noske and Bob Torres. The vegetarian socialist George Bernard Shaw reportedly argued, "I don't need a theory of value to tell me the poor are exploited." I'm sympathetic to such anti-intellectualism. But the truth is that for animalists to effect the species politics of Marxists, who have a disproportionate ideological influence on the far left, we must learn to speak their language. While I am very far from an expert on the minutiae of communist theory, this is what I have attempted to begin doing here.

Domesticated animals, like slaves, are distinct from proletarians in that they do not sell their labor power under the pretense of free choice. Rather, they themselves are commodities. Their labor power is sold all at once, unlike proletarians' whose labor power is sold in increments. "The slave did not sell his labour-power to the slave-owner, any more than the ox sells his labour to the farmer," Karl Marx said. "The slave, together with his labour-power, was sold to his owner once for all. He is a commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another. He himself is a commodity, but his labour-power is not his commodity."

Within Marxism, necessary labor is that work needed to reproduce the exploited's labor power. In the human context, it's the work slaves or proletarians perform to create the equivalent of their livelihood. All work over and above this is surplus labor, unremunerated toiling which creates profits for the slave master or capitalist. Domesticated animals also perform necessary and surplus labor for their

owners. When an animal exploiter purchases a non-human, he is not only purchasing the animal herself, but a lifetime of her labor power, which is used to create commodities that include — among others — her offspring, her secretions, and her own flesh. Her necessary labor would be that required to create the equivalent of her food and shelter. Her surplus labor would be all that beyond this, which is used to enrich her owner.

Within Marxism, there are two different methods with which slave masters or capitalists can increase the surplus value their laborers produce. Absolute surplus value is obtained by increasing the overall amount of time laborers work in a particular period. For instance, a slavemaster or capitalist might increase the length of the working day or allow fewer days off a year. Meanwhile, relative surplus value is created by the lowering the amount of work dedicated to necessary labor in proportion to that dedicated to surplus labor. For instance, a slave master or capitalist might reduce what constitutes their laborers' livelihood or increase their laborers' productivity.

Domesticated animals' surplus labor can also be divided into the generation of absolute and relative surplus value. For instance, when a carriage horse's working day is increased from six to nine hours, absolute surplus value is produced for the animal exploiter. In contrast, relative surplus value is created when chickens' productivity is increased through genetic manipulation and the introduction of growth drugs. Similarly, relative surplus value is produced by lowering the cost of chickens' livelihood through intensive confinement.

Of course, what constitutes liberation for slaves or proletarians is different than what constitutes liberation for domesticated animals. Whereas the ultimate economic goal for human laborers is social control of the means of production, domesticated animals, were they able, would presumably not want to seize, say, a factory farm and run it for themselves. They would want to be removed from the production process entirely.

I hope there are no theoretical errors here, besides the intentional subversion of classical Marxism's anthropocentrism. But again, the intricacies of theory are not my strongest suit. I have no doubt others can radically expand, and where necessary, correct, this brief outline of a potential Marxist-animalist analysis. In this era of Occupy Wall Street, Kshama Sawant, and Fight for 15, I believe it will become increasingly relevant.

Marxist analysis of forced molting  
By Jon Hochschartner

From a Marxist-animalist perspective, forced molting, a practice by which egg-

laying hens' productivity is increased through starvation and reduced access to light, increases relative surplus value for animal exploiters. "Natural molting means a lot of lost production time, and the chickens never produce as many eggs afterward," according to famed animal exploitation industry consultant Temple Grandin. "Forced molting shortens the time the chickens spend replacing their feathers and gets them back into full production faster. To force-molt an egg-layer flock, farmers shorten the hen's daylight hours to six to eight and starve them for ten to fourteen days. That makes the birds molt and shortens the molting period by eight weeks, but it is very cruel. The hens' mortality rate doubles."

Within Marxism, relative surplus value is created by the lowering the amount of work dedicated to necessary labor, that needed to reproduce the exploited's livelihood, in proportion to that dedicated to surplus labor, that used to enrich the exploiter. For instance, an exploiter might create relative surplus value by reducing what constitute's their labor force's livelihood or increasing their labor force's productivity. The practice of force molting employs both of these methods to create relative surplus value for animal exploiters. Hens' necessary labor is reduced in proportion to their surplus labor by limiting what constitutes their livelihood — in this case, their access to food and light — and increasing their productivity, by artificially stimulating increased egg production.

According to Karl Marx, "all the capitalist cares for, is to reduce the labourer's individual consumption as far as possible to what is strictly necessary," thereby increasing relative surplus value. But there are limits to which the exploited's livelihood, or means of subsistence, can be reduced. "If the owner of labour-power works to-day, to-morrow he must again be able to repeat the same process in the same conditions as regards health and strength. His means of subsistence must therefore be sufficient to maintain him in his normal state as a labouring individual," Marx said.

In the context of forced molting, hens' means of subsistence is reduced to such low levels that many are unable to reproduce their labor power. They simply perish. "One leading breeder recommends keeping food withdrawn [during forced molting] until birds lose 30 percent of their body weight," according to animalist Erik Marcus. "Many chickens face an added horror — their cage-mates die and begin to decay in the cramped cage. The bodies are not removed until after the molting period. By the time the lights are turned back on and food restored, 5-10 percent of the chickens will be dead." For animal exploiters, the loss of the dead hens' labor power is justified by the increased generation of relative surplus value by those hens that survive.

Whether hens are subjected to forced molting in the first place, according to Marcus, often depends on the cost of replacement hens. Obviously, as Marx

pointed out, "the labour-power withdrawn from the market by wear and tear and death, must be continually replaced by, at the very least, an equal amount of fresh labour-power." In another decision calculated to maximize surplus value, animal exploiters sometimes choose to kill their hens immediately after their birds' productivity begins to decline, rather than allowing a natural molt or imposing a forced molt, because they know fresh labor power can be acquired more cheaply in the form of younger, more efficient hens.

Interview with Marxist animalist  
By Jon Hochschartner

I recently had the opportunity to interview a 31-year-old Marxist animalist who goes by the pen name Christopher Harrison due to concerns about hiring and job security. Among other things, we spoke about how he came to socialism and animalism and the connections he sees between the two.

In 2000, Harrison began practicing prefigurative vegetarianism, the prioritization of which, along with that of prefigurative veganism, is arguably a defining element of bourgeois animalism. He did this after being exposed to the horrific realities for non-humans subjected to industrial farming and capitalist-inspired ideas regarding the origins of human hunger.

"I was introduced to the argument that resources are devoted to meat production for the developed world that would be more efficiently used to feed the underdeveloped world," Harrison said. "I felt I had heard enough arguments to convince me that vegetarianism was the way to go. Of course the truth is that, even with the inefficient use of resources for meat production, there is still currently plenty of enough food production to feed the world. The profit system overproduces food while people go hungry. So my choice to become vegetarian had no real impact on the logic of capitalism, the real source of hunger."

Harrison said he began his activist career identifying as an anarchist, without a clear sense of what the ideology meant. "I'd like to tell you that I came to socialism by reading Marx and Che and Lenin, but the truth is that I first became attracted to socialism when I saw that the most dedicated movement activists I met were all socialists," Harrison said. "It may sound a bit too sentimental, but socialism and Marxism really helped me make sense of the world: where we had come from, and where we should be going. I only had vague utopian visions beforehand, but afterward I had a compass."

Harrison said that within the socialist left he knows many activists who share a deep concern for animals but are not vocal about this because they believe such sentiment might alienate the speciesist human masses. "There's an interesting

parallel here with the environmental movement," he said. "For years there was all this research saying that white and middle-class people cared more about the environment than poor people and people of color, and that maybe it was a novelty movement."

But Harrison said once you start asking the right questions, it's clear that's untrue. "Middle-class people tended to care about issues like preservation of national parks, but communities of color were worried about dumps and pollution in their backyards," he said. "That's clearly an environmental issue, and very important. So rather than focus on getting people to buy expensive vegan products, we should be looking for ways in which animal rights is an issue with relevance to our lived experiences as working people."

Harrison said he believes an animalist society is only possible under socialism, but democratic control of the means of production does not imply an end to the exploitation of animals. "Suppose we had a revolution tomorrow, and suppressed the capitalist class around the world, and set up a system designed for human need rather than personal profit," he said. "If we had this revolution tomorrow, we would still inherit a system based on a lot of cruelty to animals. So cruelty to animals would not end just because socialism came about."